

S E R M O N S

On the following

S U B J E C T S.

The resurrection of *Lazarus*.

The unchangeable difference between good and evil.

The absolute necessity of holiness, in order to salvation.

The case of the prophet, who was slain by a Lion.

The spiritual (not the natural, or animal) man, disposed to receive the gospel.

The absurd nature, and terrible consequences, of transubstantiation.

Christianity, a reveled mystery.

Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

The omnipresence of God, a constant motive to piety and virtue.

The excellence of moral duties above positive institutions.

The necessity and advantages of universal liberty and free inquiry.

The reasonableness of *fasting* and *prayer*.

A thanksgiving sermon, upon account of the suppression of the rebellion. 1746.

By *GEORGE BENSON*, D.D.

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Richard Cooke

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CONTENTS.



SERMON I. The Resurrection of Lazarus.

John xi. 43, 44. And, when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And he, that was dead, came forth, bound hands and feet with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them "Loose him and let him go." Page 1

SERMON II. The unchangeable difference between good and evil.

Isaiah v. 20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darknesse for light, and light for darknesse; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. 33

CONTENTS.

SERMON III. No salvation, without an holy life.

Heb. xii. Part of the 14th v. Follow holiness; without which, no man shall see the Lord. Page 71

SERMON IV. The case of the prophet, who was deluded by a false prophet, and slain by a lion.

1 Kings xiii. 20, 21, 22. And it came to passe, as they sate at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. And he cried unto the man of God, that came from Judah, saying, thus saith the Lord, "Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment, which the Lord thy God commanded thee. But camest back, and hast eaten bread, and drunk water, in the place, of which the Lord did say unto thee, — Eat no bread and drink no water; Thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers." 101

SER-

CONTENTS.

SERMON V, VI. The spiritual (not the animal) man, disposed to receive the gospel.

I Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Page 135. 153

SERMON VII, VIII. The absurd nature, and terrible consequences, of transubstantiation.

I Cor. xi. part of the 24th ver. *This is my body, which is broken for you.* 171. 199

SERMON IX. Christianity, a revealed mystery.

A Sermon, preached, upon accepting the Pastoral care of the church, in Crouched-Friars, London, Oct. 12. 1740.

Ephes. vi. 19. *Praying always, — for me, that utterance may be given unto me; that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.* 221

C O N T E N T S.

SERMON X, XI. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Luke v. 31, 32. And Jesus answering, said unto them; "They, that are whole, need not a Physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Page 249. 269

SERMON XII, XIII. The omnipresence of God, a constant motive to piety and virtue.

Job xxii. 12, 13, 14. Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou saiest, "How doeth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven." 279. 297

SERMON XIV. The excellence of moral duties above positive institutions.

Matt. xii. part of the 7th ver. — I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.--- 315

SER-

C O N T E N T S.

SERMON XV. The glorious first of *August* : Or, The commemoration of the happy accession of the illustrious house of *Hanover*, to the throne of *Great Britain*. Preached at *Little St. Helens, London*, 1742. To the society, which supports the morning lecture there. And published at their request.

I Thess. v. 21, 22. Prove all things : hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. Page 347

SERMON XVI. Objections against days of fasting and prayer, stated and answered, --- occasioned by the war with *France and Spain*. Preached at *Crouched-Friars, London*, Jan. 9. 1744-5. Being the day appointed, by his majesty, for a public fast.

Published at the request of the hearers.

Isaiab lviii. 6, 7. Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke ?

CONTENTS

*Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry ;
and that thou bring the poor, that are cast
out, to thy house ? When thou seest the naked,
that thou cover him ? And that thou bide
not thyself from thine own flesh ?* Page 385

SERMON XVII. Preached at Crouched-
Friars, London, Oct. 9. 1746. Being
the day of public thanksgiving for the
glorious victory, obtained over the rebels,
near Culloden-House, in Scotland : --- By
his majesty's gallant troops, under the
command of his royal highness, the brave
William, Duke of Cumberland : --- Con-
taining a brief history of the rebellion ;
and pointing out the proper improvement
of the suppression of it.

Published at the earnest request of
some who heard it.

*Psalms cvi. part of the 12th and 13th
verses. --- They sang his praise ; they soon
forgot his works. ---* Page 417

SER-



S E R M O N I.



The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

JOHN xi. 43, 44.

And, when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, " Lazarus come forth." And he, that was dead, came forth, bound hands and feet with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, " Loose him, and let him go."



T. JOHN is the only one of all the SERM.
the four *Evangelists*, who hath I.
left on record this signal miracle.

Various reasons have been assigned, for his

B

men-

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

SERM. mentioning it, and the other three *Evangelists*

I. *gospels* taking no notice of it. But the true (if not the only) reason seems to have been this,——*St. John* wrote *his gospel*, long after the other three; and (as it appears, both from the testimony of the *fathers*, and from that *gospel* itself, he wrote it) with a direct design to mention some things, which the other three *Evangelists* had said little, or nothing, about. He had read their *gospels*; and found that they had given a sufficient account of the public part of our *Lord's* ministry; and therefore his design led him to say more about the more private parts of it; *for instance*, what *our Lord* did between his being baptized, and the imprisonment of *John Baptist*: and he said less of the most public parts of *Christ's* ministry; because the other three had sufficiently done that already. So here again, he mentions several things, which happened between *Jesus's* going into the country beyond *Jordan*, and his going up to the last passover, at *Jerusalem*; because this was a somewhat more private part of *our Lord's* ministry, and the other three *Evangelists* had said

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

3

said little about it.—The same thing SERM.
may be observed, as to several other parti- I.
culars, in this gospel of St. *John*.

The three former *Evangelists*, therefore, were neither ignorant of *Christ's* raising *Lazarus*; nor unwilling, or afraid, to have recorded it; but they had many things to say, in a little compass; and have so much studied brevity, that they have said very little of those parts of the ministry of *Christ*, which were more private and retired. And, therefore, as they did not enter on this part of the history, they could not (with propriety) mention the things, which happened about this time. Whereas St. *John's* principal design, in writing, was to take notice of some things, which they had not touched upon; and therefore, the mention of this miracle came properly into his design, tho' not into theirs. However, any one of the four *Evangelists* (and much more, all of them together) have said enough to convince us, that *Jesus is the Christ*; and that, if we believe and act accordingly, we may reasonably hope to have life thro' his name.

B 2

In

SERM. In treating of this signal and affecting

I. miracle, I propose,

I. To consider some of the circumstances which preceded it, and yet have a close connection with it.

II. The resurrection of *Lazarus* itself, together with some of the circumstances which attended it.

III. I shall take notice of some things, which related more peculiarly to the person of *Lazarus*.

IV. The end and design, which *our Lord* had, in working this miracle.

V. The effects, which it then had, and ought still to have, upon mankind. And,

VI. Conclude with a brief application.

I. I am to lay before you some of the circumstances, which preceded this miracle, and yet have a close connection with it. And these are such as follow:— This *Lazarus* had been the friend and disciple of *Jesus*. He had two sisters, who were also *our Lord's* disciples. They lived at *Bethany*, a village not quite two miles from *Jerusalem*; and to their house *our*
Lord

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 5

Lord used often to retire at night, when he had been teaching the people in the temple, or in the city *Jerusalem*, all day. And, finally, at their house he was entertained sometimes, together with his disciples.

While *Jesus* was on the east side of *Jordan*, teaching and working miracles, his friend *Lazarus* was seized with such a violent disorder, as that his life was thought to be in danger. The two sisters (who appear to have been very pious and affectionate women) stayed to take care of their dying brother; but dispatched a messenger away to *Jesus*, who was then at a great distance, desiring him to “come to them with all speed; for their brother was very bad and like to die; and, therefore, they earnestly begged that he would come and miraculously cure him.” They had known him work many miracles upon strangers, for which reason they hoped he would do as much for *Lazarus*, his friend.

Jesus received the message, but he did not go immediately to *Bethany*; he only sent word, in an obscure manner, by the messenger,

SERM. messenger, that he intended to permit

I. *Lazarus* to die; and that, then, he would go and raise him again from the dead. But it is a question whether the messenger, or the sisters of *Lazarus*, fully understood him. For when he, afterwards, intimated the same thing to the disciples, they were so slow of apprehension as not to understand him. However, there he continued, two days longer; and *Lazarus*, in the mean time, actually died.

It ought to be observed, from all this, that he did not die of a sudden fit, but of a gradual disease; which gave them time to send to *Jesus*, and to perceive death approaching by degrees. There could not, therefore, be any scruple justly raised, about his being really dead; as there might have been, about one that had died suddenly. For, of such an one, it might have been questioned, whether he was not in a fit, and not really quite dead? But *Lazarus's* was a gradual sickness; which ended, at last, in actual death. And so fully satisfied were they, of his death, that his affectionate sisters buried him, the next day after he died.

For,

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

7

For, in those hot countries, and especially SERM.
when persons die of putrid, or malignant I.
fevers; it is neither safe, nor decent, nor
by any means proper, to keep a corpse
many days unburied; which we in cooler
climates may safely and properly do.

Upon the fifth day from the death of
Lazarus, and the fourth from his burial,
our Lord came nigh *Bethany*, and the
twelve apostles along with him, tho' fore
against their wills. For they were afraid
to come so near *Jerusalem*; so soon after
the leading *Jews* of that city had sought
to take away their master's life.

Martha and *Mary* continued greatly
to lament the losse of their brother; so
that many of their friends and neighbors,
both from *Jerusalem* and *Bethany*, went
to condole and comfort them. When
Jesus drew nigh the village, he privately
sent the two sisters word *that he was come*.
They, therefore, went out to meet him:
and the company, who were come to
comfort them, phansying that they were
gone out of the village, to the grave of
Lazarus, to weep there, and renew their
grief; they also rose up and followed
B 4 them;

SERM. them; by which mean it came to passe, that

I. there were many witnesses to the awful
 and astonishing miracle which followed.

II. I am to consider the resurrection of *Lazarus* itself, together with some of the circumstances which attended it.

When *Martha* had the first sight of *Jesus*, she began with what lay most upon her mind, and told him, that, “ if
 “ he had been there, time enough, her
 “ brother would not have died. For she
 “ was persuaded that *Jesus* would have
 “ miraculously cured him. And (refer-
 “ ing perhaps to the message he had
 “ sent) she intimated, that she believed
 “ him to have power sufficient to raise
 “ him again; but spoke so dubiously of
 “ that, as plainly to show that she scarce
 “ dared to hope for such a favor.” *Our*
Lord, apprehending her meaning, said,
 “ Your brother shall be raised again.”
 “ I know (says she) he shall rise again, in
 “ the general resurrection, at the last day.”
Jesus (by declaring that *he was the re-*
surrection and the life) intimated, that he
 had power to raise the dead, whenever he
 pleased;

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

9

pleased; and that he would then actually SERM.
raise *Lazarus*. I.

Upon that, *Martha* went away, and privately called her sister, telling her also what had passed. And then she, likewise, came to our *Lord* and repeated what *Martha* had said before; and upon that burst out into tears, and threw herself at the feet of *Jesus*; and the company, which followed her, melted into tears, and consoled the mourning and affectionate sisters. The sight of which moved our *blessed Lord* to tenderneſſe and compaſſion; as conſidering (very probably) the miſeries, which ſin had brought into this world, and as much affected with the grief of the ſiſters of *Lazarus*, and of their friends; who ought not to have been ſo inconſolable, conſidering the miracles *Jeſus* had already worked, and the intimations he had juſt given them, that he would raiſe *Lazarus* from the dead.

And then, with a groan and a voice of lamentation, he aſked them “where they had buried him?” Upon which our *blessed Lord* alſo himſelf burſt out into tears.

The

SERM.

I.

cluding that it was out of his great concern for the death of *Lazarus*, that he so groaned and wept; some of them seemed pleased with his kind and affectionate concern for his friend; but others of them, in a scornful and insulting manner, said, "Has not this *Jesus* pretended to work miracles, and particularly to open the eyes of one borne blind? if he can really work such miracles, why did he not come and cure his friend *Lazarus*, and prevent his dying."

Upon which, *Jesus* fetched another deep sigh, or groan; as greatly moved at the unaccountable obstinacy of those *Jews*, upon whom no evidence could prevail to imbrace his doctrine, nor the clearest miracles have any effect; but they would continue in their sin, till it brought upon them the most exemplary destruction.

After *our Lord* had shown these tokens of grief and concern of mind, he went to the mouth of the grave.

The *Jewish* graves, or tombs, were commonly little cells, cut in the sides of caverns,

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

11

caverns, or the hollow parts of rocks, or SERM,
mountains, at a distance from their towns I.
and villages, and often in lonely places; 
and the mouth of them used to be stoped
with a great stone. So it was with the
grave, where *our Lord* himself was after-
wards buried. Of this kind was the grave
of *Lazarus*; and many such tombs re-
main, even to this day, as some late
travellers thro' *Judea* have assured us.

But, in order to have the more clear
and lively conception of the nature and
circumstances of this surprising miracle,
let us imagine a mourning family, with
their friends and relations, standing round
about the grave of a deceased friend, or
brother, and greatly sorrowing and la-
menting his death; that, in the midst of
the company, and close by the side of the
grave, there stands a mighty prophet, di-
stinguished from the rest by his modesty,
wisdom, and gravity, and a certain dignity
which naturally arises from so high a
character; and that he is, likewise, attend-
ed by his twelve *apostles*, who are his con-
stant associates, and always wait upon him:
— Suppose him to have given the com-
pany

SERM. pany some intimations, that he would

I.  raise their dead friend and brother to life again; --- the very expectation of so extraordinary a thing would sufficiently rouse their attention, and make them watch every word and motion of his, with the greatest care and exactness. But, suppose that same prophet to have worked many miracles before; to have healed the lame, the blind, the maimed, the leprous persons, and such as had the palsy; nay, and even to have raised some from the dead; and that they had heard of these things, and several of them believed them; --- *then* their veneration for such a prophet must have been still higher. And suppose further, that, in such circumstances, the prophet had bid them take away the stone, which stoped the mouth of the grave; and some of the company, either dubious of his power to effect so great a miracle; or thinking it indecent; perhaps, to open a grave, in which was a putrefied corpse, should reply, "Why, Sir, the corpse must needs smell and be offensive; for this is the fourth day, since he was buried." The famous prophet makes answer, "Have I
" not

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

13

“ not intimated already, that, if you had
“ faith, you should see what a divine
“ power I have residing in me, and how
“ gloriously I will manifest it on this oc-
“ casion ?” Some of the company, being
thereupon willing to see what he would
do, or willing to gratifie him, as convinced
that he had sufficient power and good-
ness to effect the miracle, take away the
stone, and there the corpse appears planely,
to all the company, bound up in a shroud,
or grave clothes ; as the manner then was,
of interring the dead. --- And, was not
this very much the case with *our Lord*,
and the company, which stood round
about the grave of *Lazarus* ?

But, to raise their attention (if possible)
still higher ; when the stone was taken
away, and the corpse appeared to open
view, *Jesus* (having prayed secretly for the
resurrection of *Lazarus*, and being well
assured that he had received power suffi-
cient to work the miracle) lifted up his
eyes to heaven, and addressed *his Father*,
in the sight and hearing of all the people,
and that to the following purpose : “ *Al-*
“ *mighty Father*, I thank thee that thou
“ hast

14 *The Resurrection of LAZARUS.*

SERM. " hast granted my request, and inabled

I. " me to perform what I am now going
 " about : and indeed, I know that thou
 " always hearest me, and grantest all that
 " I desire of thee ; and hast communi-
 " cated all power unto me, absolutely, to
 " exert it at all times, as I see proper ;
 " neither do I doubt of thy regard, nor
 " speak this out of any distrust, which I
 " have, at any time, of thy love. But I
 " make this solemn addresse to thee, at
 " this time, for the sake of the people,
 " who are standing round about me ; that
 " they may believe that thou hast sent
 " me ; and that this miracle is worked
 " by a divine power, in attestation to me,
 " my mission and doctrine ; and as a clear
 " proof that I came from heaven, and do
 " all I can to lead men thither."

After this solemn addresse to *God, our Lord* turned himself more particularly to-
 wards the corpse of *Lazarus* ; and, as it
 laid there, in the grave, before him ; and
 the people were standing round about him,
 in deep silence and vast expectation ; he
 spoke aloud, with a voice of authority
 and majesty, LAZARUS COME FORTH :

At

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 15

At which powerful and majestic call, dead *Lazarus* awoke into new life in a moment! ---- Aweful and astonishing voice of the *Son of God*, that shall, in the general resurrection at the last day, as effectually awaken all the slumbering dead, as he now performed this signal instance of the resurrection of his friend *Lazarus*. SERM.
I.

Upon these Words of *our Lord's*, dead *Lazarus* immediately began to stir. And, muffled and tied up, as he was, with grave clothes, he made a shift to creep out of his grave, with his hands and feet still bound, and his face covered with a napkin. All that *Jesus* said more, was only, that he bade some of them who stood by, to "unbind him and let him go." He did not attempt to sound forth his own praise, nor make a long speech to the people, to show them what a mighty prophet he was, though perhaps a fairer occasion for such a thing was never offered. No; — he only, according to his usual modesty, left it to his works to praise him, and to the people to take notice of them, as they were capable or disposed.

Upon

16 *The Resurrection of LAZARUS.*

SERM. Upon untying the grave clothes, *La-*

I. *zarus* (whom they had buried four days before) appeared evidently to be alive, and in perfect health and strength again. — What strange, what different effects may we suppose such a great and unquestionable miracle must have had, upon the minds and the gestures of the company then present? Some we may imagine with their hands and their eyes lifted up to heaven, in the most unspeakable astonishment; others prostrate on the ground, at the feet of *Jesus*, worshipping and adoring him, as *the Lord of nature*, come down from heaven to visit and bless the earth; the sisters of *Lazarus* viewing their dead brother, just come to life again, with such tumultuous joy and transport, that they were unable to speak, or utter one word; because of the tumult and hurry of their thoughts; and unable almost to believe their own eyes, and other senses, even though they heard the command of *Jesus*, and saw their brother come out of his grave. The disciples of *Jesus*, and all the teachable and well-disposed

The Resurrection of LAZARUS

17

SERM.

I.

disposed of the people would readily conclude, "There can now no longer be any doubt of this *Jesus's* being a mighty prophet." But the hardened and obstinate, the confederates of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who loved the praise of men more than the favor of God, — them we may suppose to be wrapt up in fullness, and resolved not to believe in *Jesus*, let him do what he would; but, with the malice, which wicked men bear to truth and goodness, considering what method they should take, to crush the fame and effects of so mighty a miracle; and concluding upon going to the leading men among the *Pharisees*, to inform them, that they might take the most speedy and effectual method to destroy the growing influence of *Jesus* among the people.

III. Let us consider some circumstances, which related more peculiarly to the person of *Lazarus*. For instance, "What discoveries did he make of another world, upon his return to our world? and was it not cruel in our Lord, to disturb the repose of the dead,

C

" and

SERM. "and to call his friend, *Lazarus*, into

I. "the troubles and miseries of this bad
 "world again? and finally, what became
 "of *Lazarus*, after his resurrection? how
 "long did he live afterwards? and of
 "what use and advantage was his re-
 "stored life to the church and to man-
 "kind?" — These are questions, which
 have been asked, by the enemies of our
 holy religion; and are, indeed, in them-
 selves of no great moment; but, as they
 may be apt to raise scruples in weak minds,
 and perplex some honest and well-meaning
 persons; — it may not be improper to say
 what may briefly clear them up; — espe-
 cially as this will tend to clear up the
 truth and excellence of the *christian re-*
ligion, and the amiableness of the cha-
 racter of the great author of it; whose
 character ought to be dear to all the lovers
 of truth and goodness.

I. It hath been inquired, "what dis-
 "coveries *Lazarus* made of the things
 "of another world, after he returned to
 "our world again?"

The

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 19

The true answer to which is, *the evan-* SERM.
gelists have taken no notice of any such I.
thing; and they have acted with the
greatest propriety, in so doing. — Perhaps,
he made no such discoveries; but *God*
might preserve his soul in a state of in-
sensibility, as designing to raise him so
soon to life again. Or, the reuniting of
his soul to such a body as the present
body might, possibly, efface all his ideas,
whatever you suppose him to have receiv-
ed; and no trace, or memory of them
remain.

But, if he had known, and remem-
bered, as much as he could understand
and receive, during the four days, in
which he continued in the state of the
dead; — his friends had a much better
oracle at hand, to discover to them all
that was proper, concerning another
world, --- even *Jesus* himself, who brought
from heaven the most ample revelation of
another world, and of the divine will;
and it was not for the disciple to be above
his Lord, or to pretend to more, or great-
er discoveries than he made. If they re-
garded *Christ's* doctrine, they had suffi-

SERM. cient discoveries; and *Lazarus*, instead

I. of attempting to amuse them with his own imperfect knowlege, would (no doubt) exhort them to attend to him who raised him from the dead, even to *Jesus*, who is the *Lord* and ruler of both worlds; and they, surely, deserved no other discoveries, who would not regard *Christ's* doctrine, nor be persuaded to obey him, after he had so openly raised one from the dead.

Luke xvi.
31.

II. " Was it not unkind in *our Lord* to disturb the repose of the dead, and call his friend, *Lazarus*, into the troubles and miseries of this bad world again? "

I answer, no; it was not unkind, if all circumstances be duely considered. Hereby he became, for a longer time, a credit to virtue and religion, in an age, remarkable for wickedness; — as well as useful to the community, and more peculiarly to his friends. — But what is principally to be regarded, his coming to life again, in this remarkable manner, has, by confirming the mission and doctrine of our blessed Lord, conduced to the eternal salvation of multitudes.

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 21

tudes. And what good man would SERM. 2
scruple to return, for some years, into this I.
world again, bad as it is, to promote so
great, so extensive a good ;—a good not
only in that age, but to virtuous and well-
disposed minds in every age after that?
And we may be sure, that *Lazarus* him-
self will not lose by it in the end ; but
will, finally, inherit a brighter crown, the
more he has suffered for the cause of
virtue and religion, and in promoting the
general good. For *Jesus*, who recalled
him into this life, will at last be judge of
him and of the whole world ;—even that
Jesus, who himself condescended to be
manifested in the flesh, and to live for
above thirty years, and suffer, in this bad
world, for the public benefit and good
of mankind.

III. “ What became of *Lazarus* ? How
“ long did he live afterwards ? And of
“ what use and advantage was his restored
“ life to the church and to mankind ? ”
I answer, *our Lord* would not carry him
about with him, as an instance of his
miraculous power ; nor give him a com-
mission, like that of the *Apostles*, to go
C 3 about,

22 *The Resurrection of LAZARUS.*

SERM. about, preaching the gospel. Such things

I. I would have looked too like vanity and ostentation. And, in a strange place, they might have questioned, whether he had been dead, and raised again? He, therefore, very probably, lived mostly at home, *that is*, at *Bethany*, a village not quite two miles from the great city *Jerusalem*; continuing among his old neighbors and acquaintance;—at least till the persecution, which was raised against the christians, about the time of *St. Stephen's* martyrdom. And there is no question, but, that he told the story of several of *Christ's* miracles, and particularly of his own resurrection, many and many a time, unto such as would hear him, or were desirous to be confirmed, as to the truth of it, from his own mouth;—withal exhorting them, futeably to his station and circumstances, to believe on *Jesus*, as the promised and long expected *Messiah*. For *Epiphanius* (one of the *fathers*, who is reckoned to have been borne about the year of *our Lord*, 320) reports, that, in “ his time, there was a tradition in the “ *Christian church*, that *Lazarus* was “ thirty

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 23

“ thirty years old, when he died and SERM.
“ was buried; and that he lived thirty I.
“ years, after his resurrection.” Suppose
that tradition to be true, he remained so
long a standing proof of the truth of *our*
Lord's divine mission. I procede, in the

(IV. Place.) To show you the end
and design, which *our Lord* had, in work-
ing this and his other miracles; and that
was, “ to be an evidence to the world,
“ that he came from above, and that the
“ doctrine, which he preached, was truly
“ divine.”

This sickness (said he to the apostles) *is* ver. 8.
not unto death, that is not to a final, or
lasting, death; *but is permitted for the*
glory of God, that the son of God might be
glorified thereby. And, after he had told
them that *Lazarus* was actually dead, “ *I*
“ *am glad*, said he, *for your sakes, that I* ver. 15.
“ *was not there*, [that is, at *Bethany*, to
“ have prevented his death by a mira-
“ culous cure, to which his sisters would
“ most earnestly have importuned me;]
“ *but now I will do something more remark-*
“ *able, to the intent you may believe*, or that

SERM. "you may have your faith in me con-
I, "firmed."

ver. 23;
25, 26,
and again
ver. 40.

The same thing *our Lord* intimated to *Martha*. — And he declared publicly, in that solemn addresse, which he made to his *Father* on that occasion, that "he so prayed, because of the people, who stood by; that they might believe that the *Father* had sent him." And, with the same view, he also called upon *Lazarus* with a loud voice. Not that the dead can hear a loud voice, any more than a whisper; but he spoke in a majestic manner, becoming the greatness of the occasion, and loud enough for all the people to hear; that they might be fully convinced that the dead obeyed his voice; and, at his powerful call, returned to life again.

This was the end and design of all *Christ's* Miracles. — A miracle might have been worked, if *God* had seen fit, for the sake of one family, or person; but our *Lord* had this extensively beneficent end and design in view, *namely*, to promote knowlege and virtue, holiness and happiness, throughout the world.

(V.)

The Resurrection of LAZARUS. 25

(V.) The effects, which this miracle SERM.
then had upon the company, were accord- I.
ing to their previous disposition of mind. ~~~~~

The teachable and well disposed *Jews*, who came along with *Martha* and *Mary*, and beheld the Miracle, believed on *Jesus*, and imbraced his religion; but the wicked and malicious among them, the obstinate and incorrigible, who were resolved not to reform their lives, nor to submit to any evidence; but to reject the doctrine of *Jesus*, whatever he said or did, — those wicked persons, tho' they had seen *our Lord* raise *Lazarus* from the dead; yet seeing, they would not see; and hearing, they would not hear, neither would they understand and believe; but maliciously went away, and told the leading men among the *Pharisees* at *Jerusalem*, what a miracle *Jesus* of *Nazareth* had done, in order to their apprehending him and putting him to death, for that innocent, mighty and beneficent work!

Nay, and so base were those *Pharisees* afterwards; as that, when the people flocked out of *Jerusalem*, and from the neighboring countries, to *Bethany*, to see *Lazarus*

SERM. *zarus*, they contrived to put him to death,

I. as well as *Jesus*; merely because he was
 the person, upon whom that great miracle
 had been worked. “What a diabolical
 “contrivance, what hellish malice was
 “this? what evidence could have con-
 “vinced such persons, and prevailed up-
 “on them to acknowledge *Jesus*, as a
 “teacher sent from *God*?” — But per-
 verse men, in all ages, will be perverse. —
 For, tho’ we have a plain and well-attest-
 ed history of *Jesus*’s working this miracle,
 writ by *St. John*, who stood by the grave,
 and saw *Lazarus* raised from the dead;
 yet, how many are there, who refuse to
 believe the report; and who will, at all
 adventures, reject the gospel of *Christ*;
 notwithstanding it is so reasonable in itself,
 and was at first attested by such evident
 and surprizing miracles? — tho’, blessed
 be *God*, we have many, who, upon this
 authentic account of *St. John*’s, tho’ they
 have not seen, yet they have believed; and
 are fully satisfied, from the testimony of
 this apostle, that *our Lord* did raise *La-
 zarus* from the dead; and was hereby, as
 well as by his own resurrection, evidently
 declared to be the Son of *God*, with power.

The Resurrection of LAZARUS.

27

I would now conclude with a brief SERM.

Application, — Ist. We may planely see, I.
from all the circumstances, that *Lazarus*
was actually dead, and consequently that
a real miracle was worked in his resur-
rection.

St. John's account is an history of a
fact, that happened; and not a parable,
allegory, or human fiction. The time,
the place, the persons, are all mentioned,
and several circumstances set down with
such exactness, as planely shows, that he
was describing what he knew to be fact.
A gradual sickness, and a real death and
burial, ended in as real a resurrection;
and this done, within two miles of the
great city *Jerusalem*; before our *Lord's*
enemies, as well as his friends; and
effected upon one *Lazarus*, who had been,
for some time, an inhabitant of *Bethany*,
— well known to all the neighborhood
before his death, well known to have
been dead and buried, and as well known
to be actually brought to life again.

II. If this was a real miracle, and so
planely and well attested, “ how fully sa-
tisfied may we all be, that *Jesus of Na-*
“ *zareth*

SERM. " *zareth* was a prophet mighty in word

I. " and deed, before *God*, and all the

~~~~~ " people?"

Luke

xxiv. 19.

We are not to regard the history of *our Lord's* miracles, as a thing, in which we have no concern. No; — we ought to consider the miracles as a proof of his mission, and a confirmation of that divine doctrine of the everlasting gospel, which he brought from heaven, and published among men. His miracles ought to be read, and carefully studied, in order to strengthen our faith in the *Son of God*, who loved us, and gave himself for us. They were not written for our amusement, but for our benefit and edification; and a sermon upon the miracles of *our Lord* deserves our regard, as well as a sermon upon his life, or doctrine, death or intercession; and it is as real a *preaching of Christ*, to preach upon his miracles, as upon any thing he has said, done, or suffered, for us men and for our salvation. He that has an ear, let him hear what the spirit hath seen fit to speak, by the scriptures, unto the churches. And, as he hath seen fit to leave upon record the eviden-

ces

*The Resurrection of LAZARUS.* 29

ces for christianity, as well as the doctrines SERM.  
of it, let us take care to consider and I.  
weigh them, that our faith may be grow-  
ing, and along with it our holiness and  
charity; and that, by firmly believing on  
the name of the *Son of God*, and imita-  
ting and obeying him, we may finally re-  
ceive life and salvation in and thro' him.

(III<sup>d</sup>. and lastly.) Here is an apt and  
lively resemblance of what *Jesus* will do  
to all the slumbering dead, in the general  
resurrection, at the last day.

He cried with a loud voice, LAZARUS  
COME FORTH. Upon which, he, who  
had been dead, came forth, bound hands  
and feet with grave clothes, and his face  
bound about with a napkin. A great and  
astonishing miracle it certainly was! "But John v.  
" marvel not at this; for the hour is <sup>28, 29.</sup>  
" coming, in which, not only *Lazarus*,  
" but all that are in their graves shall hear  
" his voice, and shall come forth, at his  
" powerful, commanding call; — they,  
" that have done good, to the resurrection  
" of life; but they, that have done evil,  
" to the resurrection of condemnation."

*Our*



SERM. *Our Lord*, by his miracles, gave a spe-

I. cimen, or proof, of what he promised, or declared of himself. He declared that he was to raise all mankind from the dead, at the last day. As a proof that he had power to raise the dead, he then actually raised some persons from the dead. Thus there was a strict connection between his doctrine and his miracles.

And we may be satisfied, that the general resurrection, at the last day, will be effected by the same mighty power, which raised *Lazarus* from the dead, and with as loud and majestic a voice; the sounding voice of the *Archangel*, and the shrill clangor of the trumpet of *God*. And the majesty of that echoing shout will well become the mighty and unutterable work. For that voice shall pierce the graves, and reach the deepest caverns, and most distant monuments of the dead; burst asunder all the strongest bars of death and the grave, and make their doors fly open in a moment!

Then shall the dead, of all ranks and orders, of all times and places, awake into new life, as *Lazarus* did, upon  
*Jesus's*

*The Resurrection of LAZARUS.*

31

*Jesus's* call; and shall come forth out of SERM.  
their graves, to stand before his righteous I.  
tribunal. For then the once despised 

*Jesus* will sit upon the throne of his glory,  
and before him shall be gathered all na-  
tions, to receive their final and irrevocable  
doom. And they shall, at his powerful  
biding, and sovereign, decisive command,  
pass away from the judgment seat; they,  
who have been pious and virtuous, into  
glory, honor, and immortality; but the  
wicked and impenitent, into punishment  
too great to be describ'd, or imagin'd.



S E R-

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various committees of the Board of Directors of the City of New York, for the year 1890.



**THE**  


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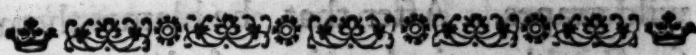
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## S E R M O N II.



The unchangeable Difference between good and evil.

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ISAIAH V. 20.

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darknesse for light, and light for darknesse; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*



IN the begining of this SERM. II. chapter, the prophet represents the great advantages, which the *Israelites* had, for making a progresse in the knowlege and practice of true religion; and their notorious abuses of such inestimable

SERM. estimable privileges. This he did, under

II. the beautiful parable of a vineyard, planted upon a fruitful hill, fenced round, and cultivated with the greatest care. And, when the master of it looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth nothing but wild grapes. After that, he blames them for several particular vices, such as covetousness, drunkenness, revelling, and the like. For which, as he intimates, God had already punished them in part, and would further punish them.

And, in our text, the prophet reproves them for another great crime, *that is*, not only practising what was wicked, but endeavoring to confound the nature of good and evil; and treating them, as if they were precarious and arbitrary things; that might change their nature, and be varied according to mere will and pleasure. As if, by merely altering their names, or pronouncing them to be so, *virtue would become vice and vice virtue*. And consequently, whatever course of life they followed, they always acted right. For, if they gave moral virtue and piety a bad character, as being legal and self-righteous, exalting

exalting the creature, and obscuring the free-grace of God ; or condemned them, as precise, superstitious, or enthusiastic ; they would immediately lose their nature and become evil. And, on the other hand, if they praised and applauded vice and wickedness, and called them amiable and excellent, true freedom, good fellowship, casting off the prejudices of education, and the restraints which the severe and morose part of mankind would impose upon the world ; or as what would exalt the mercy of God, and glorify free-grace ; —then they would presently put off their former nature, become excellent in themselves, and be attended with no bad consequences, either in this world, or in any state and world to come.

When vice was in this manner defended by principle, it was high time for the prophet to reprove them, as he does. And, in reproving them, it is very observable that he represents good and evil, or virtue and vice, as things that do not depend upon mere will and pleasure ; but as things that are unchangeable in their own nature ; and that may easily be discerned



SERM. by attentive and well-disposed persons.

II. For they are as distinct as light and darkness, bitter and sweet. He therefore represents it as an high act of wickedness, to attempt to confound them one with the other; and pronounces a woe against any person, who should presume to call good evil and evil good.

Some look upon the founding of moral virtue on the reason or nature, truth or fitness, of things, as a very dangerous opinion, and as what has a very bad tendency. Others, who have not such hard thoughts of it, look upon it as false, or at least precarious. While others regard it as a curious speculation, or a subject proper only for learned men to exercise their wits about. Whereas it appears to me in quite a different view; and I think it so far from being a false or dangerous opinion, or a matter of mere speculation, that I look upon it as a matter of the highest importance. And that it would be of the greatest service to *religion*, not only for learned men to study this point more carefully; but for the people in general to understand it clearly, and to have

have it well fixed in their minds, in order to influence and direct them in all their conduct. For, if mankind in general were once fully persuaded that good and evil, virtue and vice, are distinct and unchangeable; that nothing can turn virtue into vice, or vice into virtue: that nothing can recommend them to the favor of almighty God, without a life of pure virtue and strict piety; or repentance and right behavior for the time to come, whenever they have done amiss. And that, on the other hand, nothing can expose them to the divine displeasure, but continuing to live in vice and wickedness: — Surely, such a principle, well fixed in their minds, would be of extensive service; and lead to another sort of conduct than what one may now too generally observe.

As fully convinced, therefore, of the truth and importance of this eternal, unalterable difference and fitness of things; and, as greatly desirous that others should understand what is the foundation of virtue and true religion, I would attempt to set this matter in as clear a light as I am able. And, in proportion to the diffi-

SERM. culty and importance of the subject, would  
 II. earnestly recommend a close and careful  
 attention.

In treating of this subject, it may be proper, Ist. To state the notion of that difference between good and evil, which is the foundation of moral virtue and all true religion. IId. To answer some difficulties and objections. IIIId. To observe that this difference between good and evil may, in all cases of importance, be as clearly discerned, as the difference between natural things, and particularly between light and darknesse, bitter and sweet.

IVth. To draw some inferences; that we may discern the advantages of attending to this difference of things, and see the reasonableness of the prophet's pronouncing a woe upon those persons, who attempted to confound good and evil.

*The first thing proposed is, to state the notion of that difference between good and evil, which is the foundation of moral virtue and all true religion.*

This may be best done, by mentioning the three opinions concerning this subject, I. Some have held that the will of God,

as



as necessarily determined by his nature, or SERM.  
moral perfections, is the foundation of all II.  
moral good ; and that he as is necessarily   
good, as he is eternal, omnipresent, om-  
nipotent, omniscient, and the like.

As to which opinion, it may be observed,  
that *virtue is right action* ; and that the  
virtue, holiness, or moral perfection of  
the deity, consists in his freely choosing,  
willing, and acting right. The will of  
God, therefore, and not any affection, in-  
stinct or propension ; not any thing ante-  
cedent, or prior, to his will ; but the will  
of God itself, is the seat of virtue, holi-  
ness, or moral good in the deity. — We  
thank God for his goodness ; but no body  
thinks him for being eternal, almighty,  
omnipresent, and the like. The reason  
is, he is necessarily eternal, almighty,  
and omnipresent ; whereas he is not ne-  
cessarily, but freely, good. But the opinion,  
which we are now considering, would  
take away the divine freedom, or liberty.  
For, if his will is necessarily determined ;  
if he is not good by pure choice, and be-  
cause he understands and wills, in all  
cases, to do what is wise and right ; then,  
his freedom or agency, his moral per-  
fection,

SERM. fection, which is his greatest glory and  
 II. excellence, would be quite destroyed, or  
 taken away.

II. Others have asserted, "that the  
 " mere will, or arbitrary pleasure, of al-  
 " mighty God, is the sole foundation of  
 " virtue and vice, good and evil."

But that this opinion is both false in it-  
 self, and shocking in its consequences, will  
 (it is hoped) most evidently appear in  
 our supporting and defending the

(III<sup>d</sup>. and last) opinion, *namely*, "that  
 " virtue and vice, good and evil, are, in  
 " their own nature, fixed, everlasting and  
 " unchangeable; so that no power, no  
 " will, no being whatever, can change  
 " virtue into vice, or vice into virtue."

For, supposing intelligent beings and  
 moral agents (such as mankind are) to be  
 placed in such a situation, and to stand in  
 such relations, as those, in which they are  
 now placed; then such and such things  
 necessarily become their duty; and the  
 contrary would be criminal, and unfit, for  
 them to choose and practise.

This may be proved, by showing the  
 absurdity of the other supposition.

If good and evil were arbitrary, unfixed  
 and

and precarious things ; or depended upon mere will and pleasure ; then, what is now moral perfection and right action, in the deity, might become imperfection ; and the contrary, wise and right, proper and fit. For instance, if God should then will, or choose, to practise what is now called *cruelty*, he would (upon that absurd supposition) be nevertheless *good*. If he acted insincerely, or broke his word, he would nevertheless be *true*. If he rewarded the vicious with happiness, and punished the virtuous, he would nevertheless be *just*. And, if he did what we now call *weak* or *unwise*, as long as he should choose and will it, it would (upon that absurd supposition) be intirely *wise* and *good*. — I would be understood to mention these things with the highest reverence of God ; and am far from supposing that he will ever choose and act in that manner. But such would be the absurd consequences of making arbitrary will the foundation of moral virtue and all goodness.

Again ; if mere arbitrary will were the rule, or measure, of what is wise and good ;  
then



SERM. then God might (if had so pleased) have

II. made us just as we are, and placed us in

our present relations and circumstances; and yet have given us laws quite the reverse of what he has given us. He might then have commanded us to hate himself; and, by all possible ways and means, to injure, torment and destroy one another; to be guilty of rebellion, fraud or murder; or to trample upon reason and conscience; and, without bounds, to indulge our senses, passions and appetites, as our duty, our highest dignity, our greatest wisdom, and most sublime felicity. Then also he might have punished his innocent creatures eternally, and in the most exquisite manner; and rewarded the most wicked and abandoned of mankind, with the most transcendent and durable happiness. But who can bear the very mention of such consequences, without being shocked at the hearing of them? How groundless and unreasonable, then, must that opinion be, on which they are founded, or from which they manifestly flow? Whereas, how clear and amiable, how just and rational does the following representation appear?

—As

As there are evident differences in the natural world, so there are also in the moral. As light is, in its own nature, intirely different from darknesse, and sweet from bitter; so good is, in its own nature, perfectly, for ever, and unchangeably different from evil, and evil from good. And, as no will, no power, no being whatever, can make light to be the same thing with darknesse, or bitter with sweet; so no will, no power, no being whatever, can make good to be evil or evil good. They are in themselves what they are, they have been just what they have been, and they will remain exactly and invariably the same, without mutability or the shadow of a change. Thus, in natural things, if a globe was laid upon a plane, they would touch only in one point: Whereas, two smooth and well polished planes, of the same length and breadth, would touch in all points. And, as long as the figures remain unaltered, there will always be the same relation and proportion to one another; so that two planes will always fit one another; and a globe and a plane will not, cannot, touch at all points, or exactly fit one

one

SERM. one another. Nor can the will, or power;  
II. of any being make a globe and a plane to  
touch at all points, as long as they continue a globe and a plane; or render two planes unfit and unequal, as long as they remain smooth and of the same dimensions. — As, I say, there is such a clear, evident fitness, or difference, in these and other natural things, independent upon the will of any being whatever; just so in the moral and religious world, it is fit and reasonable, wise and right, that we should love God, imitate his holiness, submit to his will and obey his commandments; but altogether unfit and unreasonable that we should hate God, neglect his worship, repine at his providence, or disobey his commandments. So, likewise, it is fit and reasonable, wise and right, that we should love one another, and promote the public good; and nothing can make hatred and injury, violence and oppression, malice and revenge, to be our duty towards one another. It is fit and reasonable that men should guard against luxury and extravagance, as well as against extortion and covetousness: and that they, who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain  
good



good works; and particularly that all, who name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity. But all hypocrisy and open wickedness are unfit for those who make any profession of religion. It is in itself fit and wise and right, that conscience should govern those passions and appetites, which God has wisely planted in us; but altogether unfit and unreasonable, that sense, appetite and passion should dictate, and be our guides and governors. These things are, in their own nature, fixed and unalterable. And, supposing us such creatures as we are, and in such relations as we stand in, what is now right can never become wrong, nor what is evil ever become wise and good.

This is a brief account of the foundation of moral virtue and all true religion.

But against this, several things have been objected. I proceed, therefore,

II. To answer some difficulties and objections, relating to what has been said.

I. It has been objected, "that nothing could be prior to the will of God, which was from all eternity."

To which I answer that, in the order of

SERM.  
II.  
~

SERM. of time, or duration, nothing could be

II. prior to the will of God. But, in the order of nature, we must first conceive of God as understanding, then as willing and acting: otherwise we could not suppose him a wise and good being. He first sees what is right, then chooses, and then acts accordingly. And does not first choose and act, and afterwards consider whether it is right or wrong.

2. It is objected, " That we suppose  
" other things, besides God, to be eternal;  
" necessary, and independent; and there-  
" fore we, in effect, hold a plurality of  
" Gods."

But the answer to this is easy and obvious. For an eternal truth is not an eternal being; and yet *truth* was from eternity, as well as *God*; whose understanding always discerned the whole compass of truth, and whose will was always guided thereby.

3. It is inquired, " Can any thing be  
" independent of the will of God? Has  
" not God made all the creatures; and  
" placed them in those circumstances and  
" relations, in which they are? and do  
" they

“they not depend upon him, for their being and lives, every moment?”

SERM.

II.

The answer to which is, Undoubtedly God made all the creatures, and placed them in those circumstances and relations, in which they are; and all the creatures depend, every moment, upon the will of God. As long as he pleases, men continue to live; and, when they die, there is an end of their lives and present scene of action. So far all does, and must, depend upon the sovereign will and pleasure of almighty God. But then, God has always wise reasons for his actions, tho' those reasons may lie out of our sight. And, when he has formed creatures, and placed them in various relations and circumstances, there are certain duties arising from those relations and circumstances, which duties are by no means arbitrary things; but certain, fixed, and unchangeable; and as different from the contrary, or opposite, vices; as light is from darknesse, or bitter from sweet. It does not, it cannot, depend upon the will of any being whatever, that rational creatures, after they are formed and fixed in such and such relations



SERM relations and circumstances, should be un-

II. der equal obligations to love their maker, or hate him; nor can it be an indifferent thing, whether they love, or hate, one another. In one word, the circumstances of all of the creatures depend upon the will of God; but the duties, resulting from those circumstances, are fixed and unalterable. Again,

4. It has been inquired, "What is this  
" fitnesse of things fit for?"

To which it may be answered, that a wise and virtuous behavior, which is acting according to the truth and fitnesse of things, is fit for every thing, that the best actions of intelligent beings can be fit for.

It has been debated, "Whether virtue  
" consists in acting from a regard to the  
" will of God; or from a principle of  
" benevolence; or from a view to our  
" own interest and happinesse?"

Now this doctrine of the fitnesse of things will take in, and reconcile, all these three schemes. For, as far as our actions are reasonable, they are virtuous, wise or good; whether the motive to them arise from a regard to the will of God, from benevo-

benevolence, or from a regard to our own SERM.  
happineſſe. I own the principle of *ſelfiſh-* II.  
*neſſe* has a bad ſound ; becauſe it is com-  
monly underſtood of that ſordid, narrow,  
and contracted regard to preſent poſ-  
ſeſſions or gratifications, which the word  
denotes, in the vulgar acceptation of it.  
But I would here underſtand by *ſelf-inter-*  
*eſt*, a wiſe and rational regard to our moſt  
perfect, extenſive and durable happineſſe.  
— I therefore again repete it, “ that a  
“ a wiſe and virtuous behavior (which  
“ is acting according to the fitteſſe of  
“ things) is fit for every thing, that the  
“ beſt actions of intelligent beings can be  
“ fit for”.

It is fit to ingage the approbation of the  
deity, who is himſelf perfectly holy, and  
who muſt conſequently delight in the  
holineſſe of his creatures, wherever it ap-  
pears. It is fit to awaken the attention,  
and attract the eſteem, of all intelligent  
beings whatever. It is fit to promote the  
public good, the welfare of ſociety, and  
the happineſſe of mankind ; as far as juſtice  
and charity, truth and fidelity, mutual  
kindneſſe and beneficence, can promote

E

the

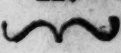
SERM. the welfare of the human race. It is fit

II.

to restrain the exorbitance of passion and appetite; and to distinguish men from the grazing herd, which have not understanding sufficient to constitute them moral agents. And finally, it is fit to secure the solid peace of our own minds, and to prepare us for the most rational and sublime felicity, in that glorious state of recompence, where the greatest heights of virtue will be most exalted; and for which a certain temper of mind is absolutely necessary. So that it is fit for every thing that moral action can be fit for, fit for the approbation of the deity; for the rectitude, perfection and happiness of individuals; and for the general good of intelligent beings.

5. "It has been said, that, as we depend upon God, and his will is our rule and law, we can have no occasion for any other. And that it would be of dangerous consequence, to teach men to separate the reason of things from the will of God." To which I answer, if it is the meaning of this objection, that in fact some have abused this principle, that



that is no argument against the principle SERM.  
itself. For reason, truth, liberty, christi- II.  
anity, and almost every thing that is good,   
has been abused; but the things them-  
selves are no worse for that. Wise men  
take care to distinguish between the right  
use and the abuse; and think never the  
worse of things themselves, merely because  
they have been abused. — But, if by the  
objection be meant, that this principle has  
a tendency to promote vice or irreligion;  
that cannot be made appear. For, ac-  
cording to the reason and fitnessse of  
things, we ought to regard the relation  
we stand in to God, as well as to our  
neighbor and ourselves. And it is reason-  
able and fit that we should search out the  
will of God, and comply therewith, as  
far as we can discover it. That is an  
essential branch of virtue, and that is true  
religion. But there is no design, that I  
know of, to set aside the will of God, any  
more than the reason and fitnessse of things.  
Both should be regarded in our practice,  
tho' in arguing we may distinguish be-  
tween them. We certainly ought not to  
separate between them, so as to confine

SERM. our regards to the one, and pay no regard

II. to the other ; much lesse set them in opposition to one another. They will both lead us to the same behavior, or course of action. And he, who considers himself as obliged by two motives, or arguments, will be more likely to mind his duty (one would think) than he who supposes himself obliged by one alone. Or, at least, a regard to two such principles of action can never promote vice, or impiety ; when the fitnessse of things and the will of God are never inconsistent, never clash with, or contradict, one another ; but always harmonize, always agree, and perfectly coincide with one another. He, who considers godlinesse as having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, may distinguish between these two motives ; but he does not so separate the one from the other, as to regard and be influenced by one alone ; but wisely has respect to, and is influenced by, both of them. In like manner, there is no inconsistency between being influenced by a regard to the reason, truth, or fitnessse of things, and obedience to the will of God ;

as

as they both lead us to abhor what is evil SERM.  
and to choose and pursue that which is II.  
good. We procede,

III. To observe " that this difference  
" between good and evil may, in all cases  
" of importance, be as clearly discerned  
" as the difference between natural things;  
" and particularly, between light and  
" darkness, bitter and sweet."

It is as easy to discern, by the eyes of  
our understanding, that it is good to love  
God, and evil to hate him, as it is to dis-  
tinguish by our bodily eyes between dif-  
ferent colors, or by our taste between  
bitter and sweet. So, likewise, in our  
conduct towards men, that justice and  
honesty are more excellent than fraud  
and oppression; that charity and benefi-  
cence are preferable to malice and cruelty;  
that temperance, sobriety and chastity,  
widely differ from lewdness and de-  
bauchery, and are much more amiable  
and excellent. All these are self-evident,  
and whoever thinks at all about them,  
must discern the one to be good, and the  
other evil.



SERM. And this is not only the notion of

II. *Jews* and *Christians*, who have been favored with divine revelation, but of mankind in general. <sup>(a)</sup> For what Nation ever made laws to oblige men to blaspheme the deity, to curse their parents, to practise all manner of fraud and injustice, cruelty and unmercifulness towards their fellow-creatures; or that they should indulge themselves in all kinds of excess and debauchery? If any potentate, senate, or parliament were to command murder and adultery, perjury and perfidiousness, theft, rapine, and all manner of violence, these things would nevertheless be wrong; and they might as well command that poison should be wholesome, and pain should be pleasure. <sup>(b)</sup>

The

(<sup>a</sup>) "Right reason is the law of truth, consonant to nature, implanted in all men, uniform and eternal. — This law can never in part, or in whole, be repealed, by senate or people. — It will not be one law at *Athens*, another at *Rome*; one at this time, another hereafter; but at all times, and in all places, one, eternal, and immutable. And one God is the common Lord and governor of all." *Cicero. in Laetant. L. 6. c. 8.*

(<sup>b</sup>) *Quod si populorum jussis, si principum decretis, si judicum sententiis jura constituerentur, jus esset latrocinari, jus adulterare, jus testamenta falsa supponere,*

The consciences of those, who practise SERM.  
such vices, bear testimony against them- II.  
selves ; and, in the most common and  
important instances, all men are judges of  
moral good and evil.

There are, indeed, some other parts of  
our moral and religious behavior, which  
cannot so easily be judged of. But so it  
is also in natural things. In the evening  
or morning, light and darknesse, may be  
so mixed, that one can hardly tell which  
to call it. In like manner, bitter and  
sweet may be so mingled, that one can-  
not pronounce it the one or the other, or  
perhaps discern which prevails. And two  
colors may be so diluted and mixed to-  
gether in a picture, that the eye of the  
most skilful painter cannot direct to the  
place where the one begins, and the other  
ends. But, notwithstanding things may  
be mixed in the natural world, light is  
never the same with darknesse, nor bitter  
with sweet ; neither is one color the same

E 4

with

*ponere, si hæc suffragiis, aut scitis multitudinis præ-  
bentur. Quæ si tanta est potentia stultorum sententiis  
atque iussis, ut eorum suffragiis rerum natura verta-  
tur, cur non sanciant, ut quæ mala pernicioque sunt,  
habeantur pro bonis ac salutaribus? &c. Cic. de  
Legibus, L. I.*

SERM. with another. In like manner, in morality and religion, the main branches of our duty, are easily discerned by an uncorrupted mind; and, in other cases, we must use greater care and attention, that we may find out what is wise and good, and choose and practise accordingly.

IV. It was proposed, “to draw some inferences; that we may discern the advantages of attending to this difference of things, and see the reasonableness of the prophet’s pronouncing a woe upon those persons, who attempted to confound good and evil.” And,

I. From what has been said, we may learn to judge of the holiness, or moral perfection, of God.

And it is a point of very great moment to have this clearly settled. For the holiness of God is the pattern, or standard, of all moral excellence and perfection; what we ought to imitate; and that, on which our hope and consolation depend. To have clear and fixed ideas of the divine holiness, we must consider that there is, in the nature of things, good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice. The under-



understanding of God is infinite; and he sees all the relations, circumstances, and proportions of things, quite throughout the whole universe. And, as his understanding, perfectly, and in all cases, distinguishes between good and evil, so his will (does not make good and evil to be what they are; but they are in themselves everlasting, fixed and unchangeable. His understanding does, in all cases, discern their difference; and his will) having no bias upon it, does, invariably, and in all cases, choose the good and refuse the evil. Hence it is, that God is a being of the most perfect moral character, or *glorious in holiness*. And, because the fitness of things never changes, and he is always determined thereby, his holiness (or moral perfection) is as immutable as the nature of things. Hence it is, that the will of God, (as well as the nature and reason of things) becomes a proper guide, or rule of action to us: because he always sees what is right, and his will always approves of it, and he chooses and acts accordingly; always commands us to do what is right, and wisely

SERM. wisely connects rewards with virtue, and

II. great and exemplary punishment with  
 ~~~~~ vice and wickedness. We may, therefore, with a rational, firm, and unshaken faith, put our hope and confidence in him. This is our most evident duty, our greatest privilege and felicity. He will not suffer his faithfulness to fail. His will is invariably governed by the reason and fitness of things; and blessed are all the righteous, that put their trust in him.

2. This eternal, unchangeable difference between good and evil is a test, by which to try all religions, in order to see whether their foundations be good, or whether they be true or false.

If they are contrary to the truth and fitness of things, they cannot come from a God of truth, who always chooses and acts according to reason and truth. Any religion, which contains bad morals, which supports or encourages vice and wickedness of any kind, cannot come from God. It wants one essential mark of a divine revelation. *By their fruits you shall know them.* By their moral tendency you may judge of them. If the
 morals

morals of any religion be good, and the positive institutions suited to the state of things, and appointed in subserviency to virtue, or true holiness; so far there is an argument in its favor, that its original is good, and its foundation laid upon an immoveable rock. And this is the glory of *the christian religion*, whose morals are the most pure and excellent, intirely agreeable to the truth, and reason, and fitness of things; and whose positive appointments were designed, and calculated, to promote everlasting righteousness.

3. From what has been said, we may discern the difference between moral and positive precepts.

Moral duties were evidently good in themselves, and therefore commanded of God. But *positive institutions* were not good in themselves, but as means to an higher end; and therefore, they were appointed as such, by the wise and gracious governor of all. Or, in other words, moral precepts are founded in the nature and fitness of things, and arise from those relations, which intelligent beings in general stand in, with respect to themselves,

or

SERM. or to one another. But positive duties are

II. peculiar to some circumstances and relations; and, in such cases, were appointed of God, in aid of moral virtue and true holiness. It is no wonder, therefore, that, when God abolished the ceremonial law, he should still injoin upon men the love of God, and of one another. The moral law is of eternal, unalterable obligation, and cannot be laid aside or abolished. But positive institutions belong to some seasons, or dispensations, and may be rationally laid aside, when those circumstances vary; or the dispensation, of which they were a part, is disannulled.

4. "As there is, in the nature and reason of things, an eternal, unchangeable difference between virtue and vice, good and evil; so that virtue can never lose its nature and become vice, or vice put off its baseness and deformity, and become excellent and virtuous; — this takes away the foundation of all the unreasonable laws in the world, whether made by ecclesiastics, or by the civil magistrate."

It

It has been said, indeed, "That, upon SERM.
"the nod of the *Pope*, all the laws of II.
"the church depend. That, if he con-
"demned virtue, and commanded vice,
"or declared virtue to be vice, and vice
"virtue, christians are bound to believe
"and act accordingly." Whereas, the
nature of things is fixed, and immoveable.
And it does not, it cannot, depend upon
the will of any mortal man, or of any
being whatever, to change and vary the
nature of good and evil. Men may com-
bine together, and make laws to hinder
the liberty of private judgment, to bind
the consciences of men in chains and fet-
ters. And, though they cannot prevent
their thinking for themselves, yet they
may hinder them from professing, and
worshiping, and acting, according to their
own best sentiments: — but all such laws
are iniquitous, and contrary to the truth
and reason of things. They are displeasing
to God, and highly injurious and op-
pressive to men. No laws, but those
which are founded in truth and reason ;
that are wise in themselves, and proper for
the circumstances of the persons for whom
they

SERM. they are made, can stand the test of ex-

II. amination, or be approved in the sight of
 ~~~~~ God. Ambitious men may set the world  
 in a flame, to carry on their own insolent  
 or covetous views. The stronger party  
 in a nation may oppress the weaker. Ec-  
 clesiastics may in synods, or convocations,  
 draw up articles of faith, and impose laws  
 upon the christian church. Wild and  
 phaniful enthusiasts may cry down *reason*,  
 and condemn *moral virtue*, and devise a  
 religion of the animal passions or affecti-  
 ons, out of their own brains, or accord-  
 ing to their own natural temper or incli-  
 nation, humor or phanfy. — But all such  
 attempts are contrary to the truth and fit-  
 nesse of things ; stand condemned by  
 right reason, and by the word of God ;  
 and will finally be condemned by an high-  
 er judge than any upon earth, whose coun-  
 sel shall stand, and from whose sentence  
 there lies no appeal.

5. “ If there is, in the nature of things,  
 “ a right and wrong, good and evil, and  
 “ the divine understanding always per-  
 “ ceives this difference, and the divine  
 “ will always chooses the good, and re-  
 “ fuses



“ fuses the evil, and is constantly guided  
“ by the reason of things : — then it takes  
“ away the very foundation of absolute,  
“ or unconditional election and reprobation;  
“ and of all those arbitrary decrees,  
“ which some have ascribed to almighty  
“ God.”

SERM.

II.

To have created the greatest part of mankind, with a view to make them exquisitely miserable for-ever ; without allowing them so much as a possibility of obtaining everlasting happiness ; and to decree from all eternity, to make a few chosen favorites happy, without any regard to their moral or religious character ; — does plainly appear to be cruelty, on the one hand ; and notorious partiality, and unaccountable fondness, on the other hand. Such a behavior in God, the maker, the father, the righteous governor, and equitable judge of all, would be unfit and unreasonable : and therefore we may be fully satisfied that God has not decreed any such thing. — To make creatures on purpose to make them exquisitely miserable for ever, without allowing them a possibility of being happy ! O shocking ! O horrible !

SERM. horrible ! Is this thy God, O Christian ?

II. and can'st thou sincerely love him, and  
 account him a being of perfect goodnesse ?

We may depend upon it, that this is not his true character ; that he is the maker of all men, and the common parent of all ; that he is a lover of souls, and that all souls are his ; that his tender mercies are over all his works ; that he delighteth not in the death of any sinner, but had much rather that all sinners would turn and live ; and that he would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Indeed, as creator, and Lord of nature, he decreed to make all mankind, and to allow them such and such situations and privileges here upon earth. And that he decreed, *before they were borne, or had done good or evil*. His original gifts are distributed according to his sovereign pleasure ; and by rules of wisdom, which lie quite out of our sight. But his decrees and proceedings, as moral governor and judge of the world, with the reasons of them, are plainly laid before us. For, as every man's actions are his own actions,  
 and

and cannot possibly become the actions of another; he will, at the last judgment, render unto every man according as his deeds have been: To the wicked, a proper punishment; and to the righteous, a noble and well-proportioned reward: Now this is highly proper, wise, and fit. This is exactly according to the truth, nature and reason of things; and what one would expect from an impartial governor, and just and equitable judge. *For shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*

6. Though the nature and reason of things be in itself a perfect law, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away; yet our reason, or our ability to find out the truth and reason of things, is not absolutely perfect; and therefore we ought to be thankful for *divine revelation*, which more clearly points out the difference between good and evil.

Reason, (or truth) is, in all cases, the grand law of intelligent creatures; but it was possible, that the circumstances of men, as free agents, might vary; and

F

from



SERM. from thence, new wants might arise, new

II. assistances be requisite, and new duties be required. For, when circumstances vary, mens obligations and duties evidently vary. And, as the sin of man has introduced different circumstances, *revelation* is, upon this account, highly proper, to point out their duty, and assure them of acceptance. Nay, I apprehend that revelation was proper, and actually given to man, before he fell. For, as the human understanding is confined within narrow limits; so we may easily see, that it is one thing to be able to discern truth, when it is clearly laid before us; and quite another thing to see, or find it out, of ourselves. The bulk of mankind want evidently to be instructed, and the most sagacious *heathen moralists* never gave the world a perfect system of morals. What a blessing would the scriptures be, in those dark parts of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty? And of how much advantage would the scriptures be, unto christians in general, if they would but carefully read them, and constantly comply with them? Notwithstanding the excellence

cellence of reason, as it signifies the great SERM.  
law of nature, the reason of man is short II.  
and limited. Temporal businesse takes up  
the greatest part of mens time and care;  
and the prejudice and indolence of many  
is amazingly great. We men can teach  
one another; and surely God can do as  
much. The reason and fitnessse of things  
directs men to make use of all the helps  
and advantages which God affords them;  
and to indeavor to improve, and be thank-  
ful for, them all.

7. *Lastly.* In as much as the difference  
between good and evil is fixed, everlast-  
ing and unchangeable, no wise man will  
attempt to confound or alter them, but  
will carefully indeavor to find out their  
difference, that he may refuse the evil and  
choose the good.

Suppose any man should forsake virtue,  
and wander out of the ways of God,  
virtue will neverthelesse be excellent in  
itself, and lead those, that practise it, to  
final happinesse; tho' it may be slandered  
and blasphemed, evil spoken of, or ridi-  
culed. Let the several vices put off their  
names, and assume the names of so many

F 2 *virtues*

SERM. virtues. Let covetousness be called *frugality*;

II.

*drunkenness good fellowship; lewdness and debauchery, gallantry and pleasantry. Let extravagance be termed liberality; and ambition, a noble spirit. Let enthusiasm and uncharitableness be denominated zeal for truth and purity; or infidelity, free-thinking: — yet, what then? names cannot alter the nature of things, render evil good, or make vice to end in final and lasting misery. Agreeable names may, indeed, gild over error, or palliate vice; and foolish and ignorant men may be deceived thereby. Satan may transform himself into a saint-like appearance, and put on the radiant dress of an angel of light; — he is nevertheless a wicked and an apostate spirit, under all that disguise. And so evil is evil, let it go under any plausible name or pretext whatever.*

Some vain and unthinking men have found fault with the constitution of the material world; but further discoveries have always made it manifest, that such objections have been owing to mere ignorance or presumption. In like manner in the moral world, cavilling and debauched men have endeavored to make evil

virtue

?



evil good, and good evil; they have at-  
tempted to change the nature of things, SERM.  
and have represented vice as excellent in II.  
itself and leading to happiness, and virtue  
as unreasonable and leading to misery;  
but they might as well hope to put out  
the light of the sun with winking, or to  
melt a rock by making a moving speech,  
and humbly intreating it to grow soft at  
their request. The order and constitution  
of the world, is perfectly wise, and the  
nature of things is obstinate, and will re-  
main just the same. If therefore we are  
wise, we shall endeavor to find out the  
truth of things, and fall in therewith,  
and practise accordingly.

Thus shall we secure the solid peace of  
our own minds; thus shall we obtain the  
approbation of every virtuous, intelligent  
being. Thus shall we take the only  
method of preparing for true, solid, ever-  
lasting felicity. And, in this way, may  
look forward with pleasure, to the second  
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the  
glorious appearance of that universal and  
righteous judge. For then he will come  
to try the characters of men, and to assign

SERM. to them their proper rewards; when *woe*

II.

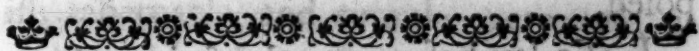
*be unto them who have called evil good, and good evil; that have put darknesse for light, and light for darknesse; that have put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*



S E R -



## S E R M O N III.



No Salvation, without an holy  
Life.



H E B. xii. part of the 14<sup>th</sup> verse.

*Follow — Holinesse ; without which,  
no man shall see the Lord.*



A F T E R the author of this S E R M. III. epistle had set before the Hebrew Christians, the example of many eminent patriarchs and believing elders, and closed all with the most perfect example of Christ, the great author and founder of our religion ; he recommends it to them, not only to bear per-



SERM. secution, and other afflictions, with patience; but also to follow peace with all men, whether *Jews, Gentiles, or Christians*; and likewise *to follow holiness, without which*, he assured them, *no man should see the Lord.*

In considering these words, it is proposed,

I. To lay before you the scriptural notion of *holiness*.

II. Inquire what is to be understood by *seeing the Lord*.

III. Point out the inseparable connection between *holiness* and *seeing the Lord*: and then,

IV. Sum up all with a very brief *Application*.

I. I am to lay before you the scriptural notion of *holiness*. In doing which, I cannot be too exact and particular; because it is that, without which it is impossible to see the face of God. Permit me, therefore, to presse you to a futable attention, in order to your being holy here, and happy for ever. And I most earnestly pray, that the minds of us all may be  
sincerely

sincerely disposed to comply with what-  
ever God requires of us, as essential to  
salvation.

SERM.

III.



By *holinesse*, in scripture, is often meant a being separated from a common, or profane use, and devoted to some sacred purpose. In that sense, the vessels of the Jewish tabernacle and temple were *holy*, as well as the tabernacle and temple themselves. But when intelligent creatures are so separated, and devoted, to the service of the true God, it is always supposed that their temper and practice should be suitable to such a separation. And, accordingly, by *holinesse*, in the sacred writings, is not meant a *sound faith*, or a right understanding, only. The *apostate angels* would excel the best of men, in *holinesse*; if it consisted in knowledge, or faith. For they not only know more than we do, but also *believe and tremble*. But, for want of rectitude of mind, they are (with all their knowledge and all their faith) polluted and impure. And so is any rational being, as long as its bent is evil, and it retains an aversion to what is good.

The

SERM.

III.

The holiness of *Almighty God* himself (from whence, in a great measure, results his happiness) is his perfect rectitude of will, which always leads him to do what is reasonable and wise, just and good. Though he is accountable to none, nor has any being to controul him; tho' his power is almighty, and he is able to do whatever he pleases; yet, as his understanding doeth, in all cases, clearly distinguish between good and evil; such is the perfect rectitude of his mind, that he will not, upon any terms, choose the evil, or refuse the good. And this must be, in some measure, the prevailing principle, wherever there is true holiness.

This right disposition, in the heart, will render the life one regular and habitual course of conformity unto all that is wise, pious, virtuous and good; and will extend unto all the circumstances and relations, in which a man stands, whether towards God, his neighbor, or himself.

There is no real excellence, but what may be counterfeited; but there is generally, some way or other, of distinguishing truth from appearance. What is

not



not genuine commonly betrays itself, and the mask either drops off; or grows so thin with wearing, that it may, at length, be seen through. And one thing, whereby hypocrisy, or the bare pretences to holiness, may be distinguished from real holiness is, that what is feigned is never uniform and extensive. For,

SERM.  
III.  


I. Doeth any man pretend to piety and devotion towards God? Inquire whether he is also an honest man? fair and just in his dealings with others? whether he makes conscience of speaking truth, or makes lies his refuge? whether he uses false weights, and false measures; or is upon the watch, to trick and deceive such as have any dealings with him? whether he is a peaceable member of civil society? and is likewise possessed of the patient, the humble, the charitable, and benign spirit of a *Christian*? whether he is sober, or a drunkard, temperate, or gluttonous, careful or prodigal, cruel or merciful, liberal or covetous? whether he is chaste, or indulges himself in fleshly lusts, that war against the soul? If he be  
unjust,

SERM. unjust, contentious, uncharitable, a drunk-

III.

ard, or a glutton; cruel, covetous, or unchaste; depend upon it, he is an unholy man; notwithstanding all his pretences to piety and devotion: — let him pray never so often in a day; whether in the church, the family or the closet: let him fast never so often in a week; hear never so many *sermons*: attend never so frequently at *the table of the Lord*; profess never so much love to God, concern for his honor and glory in the world; or zeal for truth and purity, against all weak, or corrupt gainfayers. Tho' he worship in extasy, and his eyes shed rivers of tears. Let his attempts for a reformation in the church, or the world, be never so vigorous. Nay, though he had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and had obtained all faith, and all knowledge; — yet, assure yourselves, he is, after all, an *unholy* man, and one that shall never see the face of God in peace and joy. Or,

2. Doeth any man pretend to justice and charity towards men? examine, whether he also make conscience of piety towards

towards God? Whether he keep up the worship of God, both in public and private? whether he make use of the means, which God hath appointed, for his increase in knowlege and virtue? whether he be chaste and temperate, and careful to cleanse himself from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit? whether he aim at the due mean between covetousnesse and prodigality? and live, as convinced that there is a God, as well as men, in the world? If not; let him be never so just and honest, charitable and beneficent in his behavior towards men, you may be sure he is not an *holy* man. Or,

3. Suppose any man pretend to sobriety, temperance, and chastity; it ought further to be inquired, whether he be also a worshiper of God, and one that makes conscience of doing his will, in other instances, as well as in this? If he doeth not; he is (with all his temperance) destitute of true holinesse.

In fine, this *holinesse*, or pure religion, and undefiled, before the God and father of all, is a complex thing, and consists of several branches; and he, that would neglect,

SERM.

III.



SERM. neglect, or leave out, any part, would (in  
 III. effect) maim, or destroy, the whole.

Not but that piety, or devotion, towards God, is a very good thing, if considered singly, and abstractly; and so are justice and charity, sobriety, temperance, and chastity; all excellent, rational, and amiable things; if considered separately and alone. But, in the temper and practice of men, piety alone, justice and charity alone, sobriety and temperance alone, are none of them true holiness; nor any two of them, without the third also. He, then, that would be holy, must do the one, and not leave the other undone; must come within the circle, and run the whole round of religion. He must *bring forth the fruit of the spirit, in all goodnesse, righteousness, and truth*; make conscience of practising the whole will of God, and (with the holy *Psalmist*) *have respect unto all God's commandments*; without reserve, without partiality, and without distinction.

We may, indeed, separate them in our own minds, or consider the several branches of holiness, singly and apart. But, in the

the principle, and life of a good man, SERM.  
they are always united. For, suppose any III.  
man keep up the worship of God, both  
in public and private; and (at the same  
time) live in secret lewdnesse, or open  
vice and immorality. Suppose another  
pretend not to devotion, but to strict  
justice, and extensive charity; whilest he  
neglects the worship of God, and perhaps,  
also, the due regulation and government  
of his own passions and appetites. Sup-  
pose a third person to be very chaste and  
temperate; and yet to allow himself in  
acts of injustice, or impiety: — Suppose,  
I say, that any man pay a regard to one  
or two of these, whilest he neglects the  
other, which are as important, and as  
much his duty; he is not a right *Christian*,  
nor a truly good man.

Possibly, he may keep up a form of  
religion, in order to stand fair in the  
esteem of mankind; or as a cloak to  
malice, or covetousnesse, or some other  
as notorious vices. Or, perhaps a man is  
honest, not from a religious principle,  
but out of *very knavery*; *that is*, from  
some mean and sinister principle; for the  
fake

SERM. sake of a trade, or for fear of the laws of

III. the land, or from a dread of the scandal and disgrace, with which fraud and dishonesty are commonly branded. Another person may be chaste and sober, merely to save his money, or to preserve his health, or reputation; but, when men act upon such low motives, without any real love to virtue itself, and a delight in what is pious and reasonable, just and good; — They are not pious and temperate, just and charitable, in the sight of God and conscience, nor in the account of scripture and right reason. He, that has the truly religious principle, which *Christianity* recommends, and requires of all that would be saved, loves piety and justice, charity, temperance, and sobriety; and makes no exception to any one of them. For these are all branches proceeding from the same root; or (to change the allusion) they may be compared to variety of good fruit, from the same good tree. For, as *he, that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all;* or tramples upon that sacred authority of *God*, which established the whole law; so he, that would be thoroughly holy, must



must endeavor to conform to all:—SERM.  
otherwise he cannot justly lay claim to  
that excellent character. III.

To what has been said, some may be ready to reply, *These are hard sayings; who can bear them?*—To which I can only answer, that it is not I, nor any mortal man, that can make virtue, or true holiness, to be any other, than what it is in itself; and what God, in his word, hath represented it to be. And that this is a faithful account of the terms of acceptance with God; as far as I am able to judge; after the most careful and repeated examinations of the *holy Scriptures*, with respect to this important subject.

And, if any, who may not (perhaps) so clearly understand the nature and necessity of *holiness*; or who may, possibly, be very loath and unwilling to part with their sins;—If any such persons should imagine, that an holy life has been pressed, with too much earnestness; and phanfy that the merits and blood of *Jesus Christ* would do, without so much care and diligence of their

SERM. own;—To them, I would say, That I

III. would willingly entertain as just and honorable thoughts of the mediation of *Jesus Christ*, as any person; and am well satisfied that no man shall finally be saved, but by (or through) his mediation. But then, as *our Lord* himself, and his holy and inspired *Apostles*, (who certainly had as just and worthy thoughts of the *sacrifice* and *mediation* of *Jesus Christ*, as any person can now pretend to;—as they, I say,) neverthelesse, perpetually inculcated holinesse of heart and life; as *absolutely necessary* to our acceptance with God;—can we, the *ministers* of *Christ*, do better than copy after their example, and inculcate most, what they most of all inculcated?

We exclude all pretences to merit salvation; or to expect that sinful man can be saved by the original law, or constitution of *innocence*. But, at the same time, we cannot think that lesse virtue (or holinesse) is required, since the coming of *Christ*.—On the contrary, we every where find, that the gospel, not only recommends the greatest purity, but

but requires *holiness*, as indispensably necessary to salvation; and as a way of saving men, which tends most to do honor, to the grace, the wisdom, and the holiness of God.

SERM.

III.

The terms of everlasting salvation were fixed long ago; unalterably fixed, by that wise and good God, who foresaw our circumstances, and hath most graciously and exactly fixed them; and his counsel shall stand, and he will accomplish all his pleasure. It would, therefore, be folly, nay very great wickedness, in us, to offer to alter, or misrepresent, them.

And, suppose any persons should choose to be told, that Christ has done all for them, and has left them nothing to do, towards the working out their own salvation; and might, at present, be pleased with such a delusion: Yet it is not so much the business of the ministers of Christ, to please the people, as to deal faithfully with them; and (if possible) both save themselves, and those that hear them.



SERM. The terms of everlasting salvation are;

III. in themselves, the same, and vary not; whoever understands them, or whoever misrepresents them. A wise man, therefore, will not be satisfied, without carefully inquiring into the truth of the case, and diligently complying with what God has made essential to salvation;—in the use of that power, which God has already given him; or by that help and assistance, which a gracious God is ready to grant him. For, suppose any delusion could be grateful and please him, for the present; yet a wise man is afraid, lest it should prove fatal to him, in the righteous and impartial judgment, at the last day.

But, perhaps, you may further inquire, “Who then can be saved? If  
 “this be holiness, and *without holiness*  
 “*no man can see the Lord*, must we not  
 “all despair of seeing God? Is there  
 “any man, upon earth, *who doeth good,*  
 “*and sineth not*? Any person, but what  
 “fails in some respect, or other? Either  
 “in their duty towards God, their neigh-  
 “bor,

“ bor, or themselves ? If these three SERM.

“ branches of *holiness* must be insepara- III.

“ bly united, in order to salvation ;

“ what must offenders do, but despair

“ and die ? and then, where is the

“ grace of God, published in the gos-

“ pel ? Or what need of a mediator and

“ savior for such as are perfect ?”

To this I would reply, that, as we have all offended, more or lesse, this is a very proper question ; and concerns us all so much, that it deserves a most careful answer ; which, according to the *scripture*, runs thus.—God created men intelligent beings, and moral agents ; and gave them a law, which is, in all things, holy, reasonable, just and good. To this law, men should strive to conform ; and, if any of them kept it perfectly, they would undoubtedly find acceptance with God. But, as in the present state, either through the strength and multitude of temptations ; or our own weaknesse, ignorance, or rashnesse ; we all come short of, or break, the divine law, in some respect or other ;—we can none of us hope for *eternal life*,

SERM. by the *law of works*, or the original  
 III. constitution of *perfect innocence*. God,  
 therefore, out of his *free-grace* and un-  
 merited goodnesse, hath provided a *me-*  
*diator*, to recal us into his ways; and  
 has most mercifully promised salvation,  
 by, or through him; upon terms suted  
 to the state of fallen and offending  
 creatures. In this *new covenant*, God  
 hath graciously ingaged, that whoever  
 will confesse and forsake his sins, shall  
 undoubtedly find mercy; and that this  
 mercy will be confered upon all prevail-  
 ingly righteous persons, and all sincere  
 penitents, by the *mediation of Jesus Christ*;  
 who, in consequence of what he hath  
 done and suffered, to promote the vir-  
 tue and happinesse of mankind, is con-  
 stituted *lord and judge of all*; and hath  
 particularly power committed unto him  
 to *raise the dead*, and to *bestow eternal*  
*life* upon all his faithful disciples and  
 followers.—Thus is *Jesus Christ*, the  
*propitiation for our Sins*; and the *author*  
*of eternal Salvation*, unto all those that  
*obey him*. I procede,

II. “ To



II. "To inquire what is to be understood by *seeing the Lord*?"

SERM.

III.

This is the motive here proposed, in order to induce us to *follow holiness*. There are, indeed, many other motives, besides this; such as the unreasonableness and deformity of sin; the wisdom and beauty of holiness; the joys of a good conscience; the good influence, which *holiness* has upon human society; and the many temporal advantages, which the holy person himself may expect.

But, tho' (virtue, or) holiness be, in itself, so amiable and rational; that it deserves to be esteemed and chosen, for its own intrinsic worth and excellence: — Yet, considering in how low and imperfect a state, we at present are; and with how many and strong temptations we are surrounded; God hath wisely and mercifully strengthened the cause of *holiness*, with the promises of future rewards, which will be truly great and noble; and deterred men from vice, by the threatenings of a most terrible punishment, reserved for all such as will live wickedly, and impenitently, during this transitory life,

SERM. life. — Not but that the punishments will  
 III. be such, as it becomes the great father and  
 governor of the world to inflict; and the  
 rewards all pure and virtuous, and none  
 of them inconsistent with a sincere love  
 to holiness itself.

In some parts of *scripture*, the rewards,  
 promised to the virtuous, are compared  
 to the delights of a magnificent city, or  
 pleasant country; a splendid inheritance, a  
 crown, or a kingdom; riches or banquets;  
 and other things, which men, in this  
 world, are apt very highly to value. But  
 all, that we are to gather from such com-  
 parisons, is, that there will be as sutable,  
 virtuous injoyments, for the pious, in that  
 happy state; as they, who love this  
 world the best, can find here below.  
 Nay, and more sutable to the relish of  
 holy men; whose taste and capacity for  
 happiness, shall then be purified, refined,  
 and enlarged.

In the text, it is expressed, by *seeing the*  
*Lord*, which I take to be an allusion to  
 what we find in the Old Testament. For,  
 before God would come down upon  
 mount *Sinai*, to deliver the ten command-  
 ments,

Exod.

xix. 10,

ii.

ments, in the sight and hearing of all the people of *Israel*. The Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctifie them, to day, and to-morrow; and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day. For the third day, the Lord will come down, in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai. Now, when God appeared upon mount Sinai, there was a visible glory, as the emblem of the peculiar presence of God; the seeing which, was called *seeing God*: — In like manner, there will be, very probably, in *heaven*, some such bright and illustrious appearance; the seeing which, will be that *seeing the Lord*, — to which the apostle alludes, in our text. And, as the people of *Israel* were to wash their clothes, and to cleanse themselves from all ceremonial impurity; least, instead of seeing God in peace, the Lord should break forth upon them, and destroy them, (as he threatened.) So we, *Christians*, are to cleanse ourselves from all moral impurity, all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. For, *without holiness, no man can see the Lord*

SERM.

III.



Exod.  
xix; 21,  
22, 24.

in



SERM. in peace; but, upon the wicked and un-

III. holy, he will break forth in wrath and indignation, and utterly destroy them.

God himself is present, at all times, in every place; but he is too pure a spirit for mortal eyes to behold. We now see him, as it were, by way of reflection, in the visible works of his hands; in the prints and traces, which he has left, of wisdom, goodness, and power, in this lower part of the creation. But, when once the light of the everlasting world shall break in upon us, then shall we *see God*, see him in all his glory; — provided we now have the seeds and beginnings of true holiness; or, in other words, *are the faithful and obedient children of God.*

When kings, and potentates of the earth have been affronted by any person, they will not suffer him to see their face; nor admit him into their presence. Thus, when the heart of *Pharaoh*, king of *Egypt*, grew hardened, and more incorrigible, by the very means, which God sent upon him, to humble him, and to bring him to repentance; he, in this manner, threat-

ned

*without an holy life.*

91

ned Moses, the servant of God, *Get thee from me; take heed unto thyself; see my face no more; for, in that day, thou seest my face, thou shalt die.* It is after a like

SERM.

III.

Exod.  
10. 28.

manner, but with infinitely more reason, that God will say unto the unholy, at the last day, *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire. I charge you see my*

Matt.  
xxv. 41.

*face no more.* But the righteous shall be admitted to behold the face of God in peace and joy, and to dwell in his glorious and blisful presence for ever.

*Seeing* sometimes signifieth *injoying.*

Thus to *see good*, is, to *injoy good*; and to *see good days*, to *injoy good days*. So *seeing*

Pfalm.  
xxxiv.  
12.

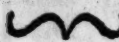
God implies not the bare looking upon the glorious emblem of his peculiar pre-

1 Pet.  
iii. 10.

sence in heaven; but, in consequence of that, *injoying* the highest felicity. For if any thing can, this will render us perfectly happy; — because, *seeing the Lord* implies, or will be attended with, every thing that is good, and desirous; inward peace, and outward injoyment. As a banishment from the presence and face of God implies every thing that is dreadful and miserable; so the being admitted to

*see*

SERM. *see the Lord*, is the being admitted, at

III.  once, into a place glorious and happy beyond imagination; a place, where all tears will be wiped away from their eyes, all sorrow and sighing will cease; all sickness, pains, and diseases shall quite vanish away. There will be no losses or disappointments; no party quarrels, nor angry disputes; no treacherous friend, or open enemy; no jarring and discord; no mortality, nor any more dying; for all former things will be passed away. — O desirable sight! O blessed and amiable vision! to see him, *the great God*, who made me, who has hitherto taken care of me; *him*, who is love itself, whose face and presence makes angels happy. When once I shall *see God*, I shall see no more misery for ever. Then all the imperfections of the present state of trial will be done away, and perfection and happiness be our lot and portion from *God!*

There also we shall see *the Lord Jesus Christ*, in his state of glory, and exaltation; see *him*, who was once upon earth, and who laid down his life for our redemption;



demption ; — *him*, whose dying love we SERM.  
commemorate at *the table of the Lord* ; III.  
and, by whose mediation, we look for a  
resurrection from the dead, and accept-  
ance unto eternal life.

There, we shall see *angels* ; glorious,  
happy, and exalted beings ; whose con-  
versation will be truly advantageous and  
entertaining. — There, also, we shall see,  
again, all our friends and acquaintance,  
who are departed in the Lord ; freed  
from all their defects, and made wiser,  
and more amiable companions than ever.  
There will be a large confluence of all the  
holiest, wisest, worthiest, and best of men ;  
in whatever age, or nation, circumstance,  
or condition, they lived upon this mortal  
stage. And how do one's thoughts swell  
and enlarge, upon such a glorious and en-  
tertaining prospect ? the hopes of which  
no wise man would part with, for all this  
world ! who, then, would refuse to be  
holy ; who considers that, *without holinessse*,  
*no man can see the Lord*, nor enter into so  
great felicity ? But, with it, he may reason-  
ably hope for the highest, virtuous in-  
joyments, of which he is capable ?

Here

SERM. Here, therefore, the two strong obligations of duty, and interest, evidently unite; and, where both these are ineffectual, it is very unlikely that any motives can be proposed to induce men to *follow holiness*, and persevere therein to the end.

III.

III. I am to point out the inseparable connection between holiness and happiness. And,

I. It is founded in the *reason and nature of things*; that the holy, and they alone, should be finally and perfectly happy.

In the very framing of intelligent creatures, their wise and gracious creator so made them, as that this connection is founded in their very make and constitution; whenever they are placed in proper, outward circumstances. It is certain, that the wicked, continuing such, shall never be admitted to the state of future blessedness; but suppose they were; — even the *beatific vision* (this seeing the face of God) would not make any man blessed, as long as he remains unholy; for so long he has something within him to render him

him miserable. Happiness is an internal thing, and there is a proper frame and temper of mind essential to happiness. A good conscience, and the security and satisfaction, which flows from a well-grounded sense of the divine favor, are a continual feast; but there is, *there can be, no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

As long as the temper is uneasy in itself, or unsuited to the external circumstances; as long as sinful habits prevail, and are delighted in; even *heaven itself, the holiest of all*, would be but a very uneasy situation. Guilt and remorse, an uneasy mind, arising from a want of *the holy disposition*, would destroy the blessedness of being in so glorious a place, and in such pure and exalted company; and, as long as a man is unholy, he must be unhappy.

2. The connection between holiness and happiness is not only founded in the *nature of things*; and is, therefore, eternal and unchangeable; but it is also the declared, positive will, and appointment of God, in the *Gospel* of his own dear Son.

Our



SERM. Our text, and many other passages of

III. holy writ, are so full, and expresse to this purpose, that it is needlesse to mention all the particular places.

Indeed, all the appointments of God, contained in the *gospel*, are founded in wisdom; which is one proof of its being a *divine revelation*; — so evidently doeth it carry the marks of truth and goodnesse in the very face of it; as well as was planted, at first, by many mighty and beneficent *miracles*. But nothing is more planely, or more frequently and earnestly, insisted upon, than the inseparable connection between virtue and piety here, and the happinesse of the future state. There, we are assured, (as planely as words can expresse any thing) that none of the unholy *shall inherit the kingdom of heaven*; whether they be ungodly, unjust, or intemperate. And, on the other hand, that God will finally render to every man according to his works; unto them who, by patient continuance, in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, ETERNAL LIFE. Our text gives us the negative view? — *without holinesse no man shall see the*

*without an holy life.*

97

*the Lord*; which implies the positive; — SERM.  
namely, that the holy shall see the lord, III.  
to their unspeakable joy. And finally, it  
is said, *There shall in no wise enter into* Rev.  
*the heavenly Jerusalem, any thing that de-* xxi. 27.  
*fileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomina-*  
*tion, or maketh a lie; but they only, which*  
*are written in the lamb's book of life; that*  
*is, the sincerely penitent, and habitually*  
*holy.*

This is the connection, which *reason*  
and *scripture* have made inseparable. —  
Tho' therefore, none of the fallen race of  
mankind attain to perfect innocence, in  
the present state; yet, unlesse they have  
the holy temper, in some prevailing de-  
gree, the seeds and beginnings of *eternal*  
*life*, in some measure, in this present  
world; they have no grounds to expect  
salvation and happinesse in the world to  
come; even tho' *Jesus Christ* has laid  
down his life for the redemption of men.  
For he will be *the author of eternal re-*  
*demption, unto such only as obey his com-*  
*mands.*

APPLICATION. I will now sum up  
all with a very brief application.

H

And

SERM.

III. And, from what hath been said, it may plainly appear, how vain the pretences are, of such, as would substitute the horrors of a dying hour, instead of the virtue and piety of an holy life. Or, of such, as can depend upon the absolution of a fallible man; upon such terms, as the gospel gives him no grounds to hope for absolution from God. Nay, if this account be true, how vain must it be to rest in the means, without striving to attain that *holinesse*, which is the end and design of all the *means*, that God hath appointed? Hearing the word of God, commemorating the death of *Christ*, at his own table, and offering up the sacrifices of prayer and praise, are commendable things, and it is your duty to attend upon, and observe them; but remember, that they will be of no manner of service, any further than, as wise and happy means, they promote an holy temper and practice; nor will the most frequent and devout attendance upon them, turn to any account, in the grand scrutiny of the last day, any further than they have made you holier and better.

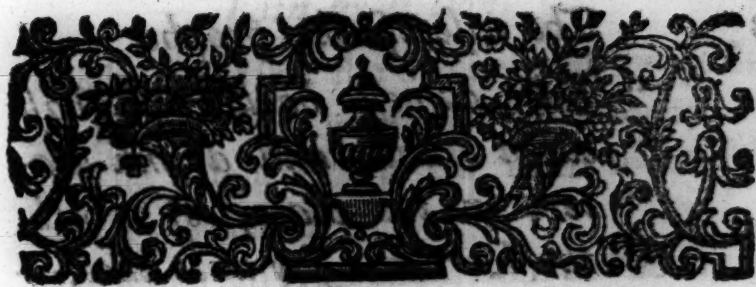
Thus



Thus have I faithfully, and to the best SERM.  
of my ability, laid the gospel method of III.  
acceptance with God, before you, this ~  
day; and they, who will not comply there-  
with, have no reason to hope that *another*  
*gospel* should be made for them. Nay,  
should the son of God, himself, return to  
our world; and submit to die, a second  
time, for the redemption of sinners; it is  
very unlikely, that such mighty love should  
constrain them. For, if they *bear not*  
*Moses and the prophets*; if they regard not  
*Christ and his apostles*; if they improve  
not under the means, which they already  
injoy; — it is utterly improbable, that  
any means should prevail upon them to  
become sincerely holy; and it is a vain  
thing to expect that *an holy God* will ever  
save men, while they continue in *their*  
*sin and unholiness*.



Thus have I finished, and to the best of my ability, laid the gospel method of acceptance with God, before you, this day; and they who will not comply therewith, have no reason to hope that another offer should be made for them. They should be, for of God himself return to our world; and submit to this a second time, for the redemption of sinners; it is very unlikely that such mighty love should constrain them. For all they hear, will they not be wiser, if they regard not their own sinfulness; if they improve not under the means which they already enjoy; — it is utterly improbable, that any means should prevail upon them to become thereby holy; and it is a vain thing to expect that as God will ever save men, while they continue in their sin and unbelief.



## S E R M O N IV.



The case of the prophet, who was deluded by a false prophet, and slain by a lion.

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I KINGS xiii. 20, 21, 22.

*And it came to passe, as they sate at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. And he cried unto the man of God, that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, "Forasmuch as*  
*"thou hast disobeyed the mouth*  
*"of the Lord, and hast not kept*  
*"the commandment, which the*  
*"Lord thy God commanded thee.*



*The case of the prophet*

“ *But camest back, and hast*  
 “ *eaten bread, and drunk wa-*  
 “ *ter, in the place, of which,*  
 “ *the Lord did say unto thee,---*  
 “ *Eat no bread, and drink no*  
 “ *water ; -- Thy carcase shall*  
 “ *not come unto the sepulchre*  
 “ *of thy fathers.*”

SERM.  
 IV.



UPON the creation, man  
 knew, and acknowledged,  
 only the one true and liv-  
 ing God. After the fall,  
 there were two families,  
 or people; the family of God, and the  
 family of *satan*. It doeth not appear that  
 the family of *Cain* fell into idolatry; tho'  
 they were the family of *the wicked one*;  
 disobeying God, and neglecting his wor-  
 ship. By their wickedness, they infect-  
 ed the family of *Seth*, which was the fa-  
 mily of God. And, when the two families  
 mixed (or *the sons of God married the*  
*daughters of men*) the infection of vice  
 spread so much, till all mankind, except  
*Noah's* family, were grown corrupt. Upon  
 which,

which, God sent the deluge, and swept off that wicked generation all at once; that he might people the earth a-new with a pious seed. SERM.  
IV.

In about ten generations from the flood, a new evil spread very much, *that is* IDOLATRY. The most antient idolatry was, very probably, a worshipping the heavenly bodies; and especially the sun, the grand source of light, heat, and many other blessings. Whether, from the traditions about the *Sbeckinah*, they worshiped before the sun, as the glorious emblem of the deity (which the *Persian magi* practised; whatever gave rise to their opinion) or, whether they imagined the sun to be an intelligent being, which designed to bestow the blessings it conveys; — as some of the *antient heathens* seem to have done; — that sort of idolatry appears to have been the most antient. — The next sort of idolatry, was deifying and worshipping of the dead. And *Laban's teraphim*, or gods, were, perhaps, little images, or statues, in memory of some of his renowned ancestors; or of some deceased persons, that had been eminent; and who

SERM.

IV.

were, therefore, looked upon, and treated, as Gods. *Josephus* calls them, *the figures of the Gods, which Laban and his ancestors had in great veneration.*

Though *idolatry* spread in about ten generations from the flood; yet it had begun before, and had corrupted so many, especially in *Chaldea*; that even *Abraham* himself and his father's family seem not to have wholly escaped the infection. *And Joshua said unto all the people,*

*Josh.*  
*xxiv. 2.*

*Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, "Your fathers, in former times, dwelt on the other side of the flood, [that is, of the great river Euphrates;] even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other Gods."* And *St. Paul* is, by some, thought to have called *Abraham* himself an idolator; and to have had his eye upon the words of *Joshua*;

*Rom. iv.*  
*5.*

*when he saith, But faith is accounted for righteousness, not to the person that worketh [the works of perfect innocence]; but unto him who believeth in him, [or in that God,] that justified him, who had been ungodly, or an idolator;*

I am



*slain by a lion.*

105

I am apt to think that *Canaan* was not, SERM.  
then, so universally infected with *idolatry*, IV.  
as *Chaldæa*; and, therefore, God might  
call *Abraham* into that country; where  
*Melchisedec*, and his subjects, were wor-  
shippers of the *true God*, and made use of  
*no idol-mediators*; — that *Abraham* him-  
self might be freed from the infection,  
which had seized his own kindred; and  
be the mean of checking the spread of  
*idolatry* among the *Canaanites*.

*Idolatry* is a complicated evil. It is not  
a mere error in speculation, but hath al-  
ways been attended with very bad conse-  
quences. It procedes from, or gives men,  
wrong notions of God, or of his wor-  
ship; and then leads them into supersti-  
tion and vice. For, though imitation of  
*God's* moral character leads to the highest  
virtue, yet the imitation of a false God  
leads commonly to wickedness.

As *idolatry*, therefore, has in general  
led to vice; it is no wonder that God, in  
his great goodness, provided the means  
of a reformation; — appearing in the  
cloud of glory; and reveling himself, in  
a most remarkable, affecting manner, un-

to

SERM. to *Abraham*; and afterwards to *Moses*

IV. and the nation of *Israel*, the descendents of *Abraham*; who were set up, as a light to inlighten the earth; exalted, like a city upon an hill; an illustrious and standing monument against an idolatrous, apostate world.

When the *Israelites*, by their long stay in *Egypt*, were in danger of falling into like idolatry with their *Egyptian* neighbors, God brought them out, by signal and repeted miracles; and, in the solitary wilderneffe, he formed them into a kingdom; — they, by a willing subjection, becoming his people; and he, by a peculiar covenant, becoming their head, Lord, or king. *Idolatry*, therefore, in the kingdom of *Israel*, was *high-treason*; because God was their king; and to worship another God was, in effect, to own another king. It was, therefore, one of their laws, *that they should not suffer an idolator to live*; but, if any among them were guilty of idolatry, he was to be punished with death.

God gave the law unto *Israel* by *Moses*; but when the nation of *Israel*, and especially

cially their kings, were infected with *idolatry*, God did not send a new lawgiver; but only raised up *prophets*, to admonish them of their sin, and to exhort them to return to the true God, and to the observation of that law, which he had given by *Moses*. And most of the prophecies of the famous prophets, from this time forward, ought to be considered with a particular reference to this. The grand contest was between the true God, and mediators of his appointing, on the one hand; and idol-gods, or idol-mediators, on the other hand. The careful observation of this particular; and the remembering it, when we read larger, or lesser, portions of the Old Testament, after the law was given, would greatly conduce to our better understanding what we read.

The period of sacred history, of which our text is a part, will be greatly illustrated by these observations. *Saul*, the first king in *Israel*, and king *David*, the second of their kings, (though they were guilty of other great crimes; yet) both of them carefully avoided *idolatry*. But *Solomon*, by marrying strange wives, wo-  
men



SERM. men of idolatrous nations, did, in his old

IV. age, fall into *idolatry*. Upon which God threatened, that he would rend the kingdom from his family, and give ten of the tribes to *Jeroboam*, the son of *Nebat*, a man of great courage and diligence, who had preferment in the court of *Solomon*.

1 King xi. 4, &c. When king *Solomon* understood that, he sought the life of *Jeroboam*; who fled v. 26, &c. into *Egypt* for safety, and there he tarried till after the death of *Solomon*.

Upon his death, his son *Rehoboam* (who was almost as remarkable for his folly, as his father had been for his uncommon wisdom) highly disgusted the nation of *Israel*, by following the counsel of the rash young men, that were his companions; and threatening how severely he would rule over them. Upon which, ten out of the twelve tribes revolted from the house of *David*; and chose for their king, *Jeroboam*, the son of *Nebat*, who had been pointed out, to the ten tribes, as their king, by the prophet *Jeboijah*.

As the two tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin* continued to adhere to *Rehoboam*, he had the city *Jerusalem*, and the temple, in his

his dominions. And, according to the law of *Moses*, all the males, in all the twelve tribes of *Israel*, were to go, three times every year, up to *Jerusalem*, to worship God, at the temple there. Now *Jeroboam*, king of the ten revolted tribes, apprehended that the people's frequent going up to *Jerusalem*, would, by degrees, reconcile them, to *Rehoboam's* government, and devert him of his authority. He, therefore, (having spent some years in *Egypt*, and being well acquainted with their idolatry: — and being, very probably, now in subjection to *Egypt*) set up two images, the one at *Dan*, the other at *Bethel*, two of the towns within his own dominions. The images were like *Aaron's* calf; and made in imitation of the *Egyptian Apis*.

To those two images, at *Dan* and *Bethel*, *Jeroboam* ordered his subjects to repair, thrice a year, instead of going up to *Jerusalem*, as God had commanded.

I do not suppose, that either the image, which *Aaron* made; or those two, set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*, were designed to represent a false God, (as the same sort of images

SERM.  
IV.

SERM. images did, very probably, in *Egypt* :)

IV. but, as mediators, by, or through, which they intended to worship the true God. However; that was contrary to their law. For, as, by the first commandment, *Israel* was charged to have no other Gods, but the one true God : So, by the second commandment, they were charged not to have any *idol-mediators*, or any image of any kind, by, or through which, to worship the one true God.

Some may, perhaps, think that, according to human policy, *Jeroboam's* project seemed fair and plausible. As, by frequent conversing together, men contract an intimacy with one another ; and the prejudices of the ten tribes against the house of *David*, seemed more likely to wear off, by their going three times a year to *Jerusalem*, and their frequent and familiar conversation with the kingdom of *Judab*. But, as the finest human policy, and best laid schemes, are nothing, when God blows upon them and blasts them, *Jeroboam* ought to have done his duty, and left events to God ; whose favor is a much better security, to any king,



*slain by a lion.*

III

SERM.

IV.

king, than all human contrivances whatever. For God (if he had so pleased) could have given him the other two tribes, as easily as he had already given him ten. But, instead of acting with piety, as he ought to have done, *Jeroboam* broke the law; which God had given, by *Moses*, for all *Israel* to observe; and broke it in a capital point, *that is*, by running into *idolatry*; — to guard against which was the principal design of the *Law*.

The *Jewish high-priest* had been appointed, by God himself, as mediator between God and that one nation of *Israel*; and the family of *Aaron* alone were to be priests; as well as the temple at *Jerusalem*, the place where they ought to have worshiped. But *Jeroboam* made graven images, as mediators between God and the people; and ordered them to worship at *Dan* and *Bethel*; burning incense himself, as if he had been a priest; and making priests of men, who were not of the family of *Aaron*.

To testify against *Jeroboam's* wickedness, and particularly against his *idolatry*;

SERM. a prophet was sent of God, out of *Judah*;

IV.

whom *Josephus* calls *Jadon*; and others, by other names. That prophet came out of *Judah*, I say, and arrived at *Bethel*, at the very time that king *Jeroboam* was sacrificing there, at one of the solemn feasts. Upon which, he cried out against the altar; and prophesied, in the name of the Lord, that there should one, *Josiah*, be borne, in the house of *David*; who should offer the bones of the *priests* and of other *idolators*, on that very altar, where the king was then sacrificing. And, in testimony of his mission, he foretold that the altar should presently be split in pieces; and the ashes, that were upon it, should be scattered about, upon the ground.

Such great men as kings do not love to be reprov'd, in so plain and public a manner. And *Jeroboam*, being enraged at his boldness, ordered the prophet to be apprehended immediately; that he might be punished, as such an affront deserved. And, when the king himself, in great fury, stretched out his hand, to apprehend him, or to point to others to do it;

it; his hand suddenly withered, and be- SERM.  
came fixed, like a dead limb; so that he IV.  
could not move it, or draw it back again.

This miracle upon the king was presently followed by the rending of the altar, in a miraculous manner, and dispersing the ashes that were upon it; which were most striking evidences, that God had sent the prophet.

Upon that, the king desired him to pray for him, that the use of his hand might be restored; for he thought it in vain to pray himself; or to apply to his own idols, which could not then help him. The benevolent prophet, who was not sent for his destruction, but for his reformation, immediately prayed for him; and God, at his request, worked a third miracle, and presently healed the king's hand again. The king, moved with this kind and generous treatment, invited him to go along with him to his palace, and refresh himself; and he would amply reward him. But God, in detestation of their idolatry, or for the prophet's own safety, had charged him not to eat or drink there; nor to return the same way  
I that



SERM. that he went thither. He, therefore,

IV. bravely refused the king's invitation.

But, though he so far acted well, and the king could not prevail upon him to disobey the divine command; yet there was a false prophet prevailed upon him, by the following stratagem. Having learned from his sons, all that had past between him and the king; and particularly that God had charged him not to take any refreshment, or eat and drink, among the *idolatrous Israelites*; — and, having inquired what road he took, in his return to *Judah*, he went after him, in all haste; and, when he had found him sitting and resting himself under an oak-tree, he proposed to him to go back, and eat bread in his house. *Jadon* told him that God had commanded the contrary, and he could not do it. Upon which the impostor said, *I am a prophet as you are, and God has sent an angel to me, to fetch you back, that you may refresh yourself, before you return to Judah.* *Jadon* weakly believed that lying prophet, and went back with him.

Undoubt-

Undoubtedly the command of God, SERM.  
IV.  
concerning his not eating and drinking in

that place, was of such a nature, as that God himself might have revoked it, if he had seen fit; and have sent an angel to signify that to another prophet. All this will readily be granted. But the great fault of the prophet *Jadon* was, that, as he had had an expresse revelation from God himself, not to eat and drink there, he ought not to have believed a stranger, that brought him a contrary message; unlesse he had worked a miracle, to confirm his mission and contrary message. For it is as great a fault, in the sight of God, to believe any thing too hastily, and without evidence; as it is to refuse to believe, and to acknowledge the conviction, where there is sufficient evidence.

While the two prophets were sitting at the table together, he had an awful message sent him by the mouth of the false prophet. For, God did not now vouchsafe to grant, to the true prophet, the favor of an immediate revelation; as he had so lately gone contrary to what he had received. But, as he had, weakly and without rea-

SERM. son, believed the false prophet, when he  
 IV. contradicted the expresse command of  
 God; he had now good reason to believe  
 him, when he declared unto him his sin,  
 and foretold the punishment.

If it should be doubted, “whether he,  
 “who brought him back, was a true or  
 “a false prophet; because the *word of the*  
 “*Lord now came unto him;*” — I would  
 observe that, upon occasion, God saw fit  
 to prophesie, by the mouth of wicked  
*Balaam*; and that there was a remarka-  
 ble propriety, in God’s now prophesying,  
 by this *false prophet*; as he was thereby  
 obliged to accuse himself of *lying*, and  
 that very mouth made to pronounce the  
 true prophet’s doom, which he had cre-  
 dited contrary to the divine command.  
 What makes me think this a false pro-  
 phet, is, that *Josephus* has called him a  
*false prophet*; that he is never called a  
*man of God*, or a *prophet of the Lord*, in  
 the *scripture*; as *Jadon* is frequently  
 called, in this very chapter. He is stiled  
 only a *prophet*; and we are left to find  
 out, whether he was a true or false pro-  
 phet, from the rest of his character.

Thus



Thus *Ahab's* flatterers were stiled *pro-* SERM.  
*phets*; and yet it is evident, from what IV.  
 follows, that, though they were 400, <sup>1 Kings</sup>  
 they were all *false prophets*. Again; this <sup>xxii. 6.</sup>  
 prophet, not only told a direct and deli-  
 berate lie; but he, likewise, ordered his  
 sons to bury him in the same grave with  
 the true prophet; for fear his bones  
 should be taken up, and burnt, upon that  
 altar, among *idolators*. By which it  
 plainly appears, that he was conscious to  
 himself that he had been guilty of *idola-*  
*latry*. But, by that stratagem, he did  
 escape. For, above 300 years after, the <sup>2 Kings</sup>  
 prophesie was fulfilled by *Josiah*. And, <sup>xiii. 17,</sup>  
 because the sepulchre had an inscription <sup>18.</sup>  
 upon it, denoting that the prophet, who  
 had prophesied of the rending of that al-  
 tar, was buried there, *Josiah* spared his  
 bones, together with the bones of the  
 false prophet; when he burned the bones  
 of several that had been *idolators*. Indeed,  
 I suspect this impostor to have been one <sup>1 Kings</sup>  
 of the priests of the high-places. How- <sup>xiii. 2.</sup>  
 ever, I think it very evident that he was  
 an idolator, and consequently must have  
 been a *false prophet*.

SERM. As *Jadon*, the true prophet, was re-

IV. turning home, a lion met him, and slew

him. But, here again was another miracle. For the lion was not permitted to

devour him, or to kill the ass on which

he rid. Had his body been eat up, or

immediately carried off, the people would

not have known what was become of

him ; and consequently could not have

had such clear knowlege of the prophesie's

being fulfilled. But, as it was, it became

known to all the country round about.

v. 25.

For men passed by, and saw the corpse

lying in the road, and the lion still tame-

ly standing by the corpse : and they came

and spoke of it, in the city, where the

old prophet lived. — From whence they

might justly infer, that God is angry with

those that disobey his commands ; as he

would not spare even so much as his

own prophet, when he broke so plane

and expresse a command. Thereby he

was prevented from being buried in the

sepulchre of his fathers ; as God, by the

other prophet, had foretold. For, when

the false prophet had heard of a stranger's

being killed by a lion, and the other re-

markable

markable circumstances of his death, he SERM.  
concluded it was the true prophet, and IV.  
went and took up his body, and buried it in his own grave, with all proper funeral rites and lamentations; declaring, at the same time, that he verily believed all would come to passe, as the true prophet had prophesied; notwithstanding he had been slain, for that one act of disobedience.

What we further propose, upon this subject, is (1.) To consider, more particularly, this prophet's fault, together with the aggravations of it.

II. Whether the punishment was not too great for the crime; and whether it did not tend rather to harden wicked king *Jeroboam* in his idolatry, than deter him from it.

III. Conclude with a practical application.

1. *What was the prophet's fault, together with the aggravations of it?*

His great fault was *credulity*; or, a too great forwardness to believe, without proof and sufficient examination. — The man, who came to him, and pretended to



SERM. have been a prophet, appears to have

IV.

been an intire stranger to him; and then he lived within the dominions of idolatrous *Jeroboam*; and yet there is no intimation of his having, at any time, declared against his idolatry. Indeed, I take him to have been one of *Jeroboam's* creatures, who flattered the king in his idolatry, and other vices, and was afraid of a reformation, for fear of losing all his influence over his master. And, tho' *Jadon* might not know all this, he had more reason to have taken him for a false prophet, than a true one. But, without considering these things, he gave credit to him; and that, in a message, directly contrary to what he himself had received from God.

The bulk of mankind have, in all ages and nations, been too forward in believing; without sufficient evidence, and a just and careful inquiry. The prejudices of education; a reverence for their parents, or teachers; the company they converse with; the books they commonly read; the confidence of those who set up for infallible guides; and their uncharitable

charitable censuring and condemning others ; — These, and many like things, have led men into absurd doctrines and unreasonable practices. Whereas, we ought not to believe any person, without examining into the grounds and evidences of what he delivers. This is the moral of this part of *sacred history* ; and that *reasonable service*, which *God* expects at our hands : if we would not take up with we know not what, and believe we know not why.

Had *the prophet Jadon* refused to believe, 'till the other had worked a miracle ; or given him some proof, sufficient to convince him, in a just and reasonable manner ; he had done very well, and would not have been deluded, as he was. But his forwardness to believe a stranger ; and one that, notwithstanding all his pretensions, was really a false prophet, and an idolator ; — to believe him, I say, without any good reason ; nay even contrary to what he knew to be a divine revelation ; was certainly criminal, and what cannot be vindicated in his conduct.

*That*

SERM. *That was his crime, then. — The pecu-*

IV. *liar aggravations were these : He was not*  
 then concerned in a small matter, or acting as a private man. If it had been so, his fault had not been so very heinous. But he was sent as *a prophet*, in a public character, upon a message, which he had had the honor to receive immediately from the spirit of God; and upon an affair of no less moment, than charging a great king and his subjects with falling into *idolatry*; — a king, whom *God* had raised up, and set over a kingdom, which was under peculiar obligations to renounce *idolatry*; and to worship the true God, in the way he had appointed. He was, in effect, to declare for *God* or *Baal*; or rather, (properly speaking) to condemn the manner of worship, which *Jeroboam* had set up, at *Dan* and *Bethel*; and to confirm that at the temple in *Jerusalem*. — For a man, through weaknesse and want of attention, to betray his country, or to ruine the public affairs; when it is his direct business to consult and promote the public welfare; is certainly a much greater crime,



crime, than to ruine his own private affairs, SERM.  
through want of care and consideration. IV.

Tho' they are, no doubt, both of them great crimes. — This, then, of the prophet's, was a public crime, and a very heinous one; as the message, on which he was sent, was so very important. Let us,

2. Proceede to inquire, *Whether the punishment was not too great for the crime; and whether it did not tend rather to harden wicked king Jeroboam in his idolatry, than to deter him from it?*

The punishment itself was temporal death. So we find that some of the *Christians*, at *Corinth*, were punished with sicknesse, and others with temporal death; for their indecent behavior at the Lord's table, And they were so chastened of the Lord, to prevent their being condemned with a wicked world, at the last <sup>1 Cor. xi.</sup> 32. day. In like manner, this prophet, who appears, in his general character, to have been a very good man, was punished with temporal death; for that one sin, of rashly believing the false prophet, and going back with him, to eat and drink among

SERM. among idolators, contrary to the expresse

IV. command of God.\* He had warning of  
 \* See Bi- his sin, and of the danger to which it  
 shop Pa- would expose him, and time to see his  
 trick on error, and to repent, before his death;  
 1 Kings and, from his whole character, I am satisf-  
 xiii. 26. fied he died a true penitent. What may  
 confirm this, is, that the judgment, which  
 God, by the other prophet, denounced  
 against him, was only a temporal calamity,  
*namely, that he should not be buried in the*  
*sepulchre of his fathers,* — which the  
 antients thought a very great infelicity.  
 If he had acted so weakly, in his own  
 private affairs, I do not suppose that God  
 would have punished him with so re-  
 markable a death. But, when God sent  
 him in so public a character, to bear  
 testimony against so high a crime as *idola-*  
*try*; and had withal expressly charged  
 him not to show these idolators so much  
 countenance, or to trust his person so long  
 with them, as to eat and drink among  
 them: and yet he was so soon seduced,  
 and persuaded to believe the contrary:  
 — In such a case, if God had not re-  
 markably punished him, it might have  
 hardened

hardened the *Israelites* in their idolatry and disobedience; and made them conclude, that God was not so jealous of his honor, as that prophet had pretended.

SERM.  
IV.

It is, indeed, observed that, after these things, *Jeroboam* turned not aside from his evil way, but continued in his idolatry, and other wickedness; and seemed rather hardened by the prophet's death, than in the least reformed, by the prophesie he had delivered, the miracles he had worked, or the untimely death by which he died. But it ought to be remembered, that wicked men are glad to take hold of all pretences to defend themselves in their folly and wickedness. And that, as *Jeroboam* repented not, after the prophesie and miracles of *Jadon*; neither would he have repented, suppose the prophet had not been slain, as he was. For, by the prophet's death, he had one more motive to repentance. Not to mention the additional miracles. For, besides the rending of the altar, and his own hand's being withered, and restored; there was now added the miracle of the lion's standing motionless in the same place, with-

out



SERM. out killing the asse, devouring the body

IV. of the prophet, whom he had slain, or hurting the people that passed by. And,

from the prophet's death, *Jeroboam* ought to have argued thus, " Will not God

" spare his own prophet ; when he dis-

" obeys his expresse command, in one in-

" stance ? How then can I escape, if I

" go on, in my *idolatry*, and other acts

" of disobedience ? As my sins are more

" aggravated, I may justly expect that

" my punishment will be so too. *If the*

" *righteous scarcely be saved, where shall*

" *the ungodly* (the idolator) *and the sinner,*

" *appear ?*" So evident, so plane is it,

that the prophet's death had the same

meaning with his late prophesie and mi-

racles, *namely*, to deter *Jeroboam* and the

ten tribes from their idolatry ; and it had

this tendency in itself, though they did

not hearken, but persisted in their wicked-

ness.

The sum of what hath been said,

comes to this ; — The prophet's crime

was great and aggravated, and the punish-

ment was not beyond what the crime de-

served. He died (as he ought to have lived)

for

for the public good. And we applaud SERM.  
IV.  
those great and good men, who have voluntarily hazarded, or sacrificed, their lives for the public good. It is true, his punishment was *death*; but that was not so great a punishment as some may imagine; because he died in the favor of God; he ended this mortal life, only a few years sooner than, by the course of nature, he otherwise might have done. — Considering all these things, his punishment was not an over-proportion for his crime. Let us,

III. Conclude with a practical *application*.

1. “ From the consideration of this  
“ part of holy scripture, you may easily  
“ observe, how groundlesse that position  
“ is, on which some have laid so great a  
“ stresse; namely, *That God sees no sin*  
“ *in believers.*”

The prophet, *Jadon*, was a believer of the things which were then reveled, and one of the people of God; as, I think, very evidently appears. And yet God saw his disobedience to be a very  
great

SERM. great sin in him, and therefore punished

IV. him with an untimely death. \*

\* Com-

pare with  
this

Numb.

xx. 11,

12.

I freely own, God will not punish his own people in a future state; *that is*, whoever is *holy*, in the prevailing temper of his mind, and in the habit of his life, God will pardon; and, by *Jesus Christ*, raise from the dead, and put in possession of eternal life and happiness. But even such persons are attended with some lesser failings and imperfections; and God, (who knows all things) cannot but see them all. And (as he is infinite in purity and holiness, himself) he cannot but disapprove of sin, wherever, or in whomsoever it is found. And, as he sees all the sins, which good men are guilty of, so he often punishes them; tho' not with everlasting perdition, yet with temporal afflictions and punishments, *Whom he loveth he chasteneth*, and commonly *scourgeth such as he receiveth*.

2. " From what hath been said, I would  
" further observe that, tho', at the first  
" appearance, there may seem to be some  
" difficulties in *holy scripture*; yet it doeth  
" not follow that we are immediately to  
give.



‘ give it up, as if the prevailing evidence  
“ was not for, but against, it.”

SERM.  
IV.

This very difficulty, of one prophet's deceiving another, and of the deceived prophet's being put to death, for falling into the delusion, hath been made an objection to *the Bible*; as if the book, which contained such particulars, could not, possibly, be a revelation from God. Whereas, you see that the deceiver was a *false prophet*; for whom a greater punishment is reserved, in a future state. And *the true prophet* was highly to blame, in believing him so readily, and that in a message directly contrary to what God himself had commanded. He, therefore, was justly punished with an untimely death; to make it manifest to mankind how dreadful a thing it is to disobey God!

3. “ You are not to believe any thing,  
“ as a revelation from God, without a  
“ careful inquiry and proper evidence.”

It is not sufficient that your fathers before you believed so and so; or that many, whom you take to be wise and learned, pious and good men, believe thus or thus.

K

No;

SERM. No; such an implicate faith, and believing

IV. without knowing what, or why, is what  
 ~~~~~ protestants, in general, very justly condemn in the Church of Rome, and ought to condemn in themselves, or in one another.

This very sin, of credulity, cost the prophet his life; and the Beroeans, on the other hand, are innobled by patent (as one has well expressed it) for searching the scriptures daily, to see the nature and evidence of what an apostle preached unto them. That apostle doeth likewise say,
 Acts xvii. 11. *I speak as to wise men, judge you what I say.* And, in another place, he charges the christians to *prove* (or examine) *all things*, and then to *hold fast that which is good*. And, to the same purpose, St. John I John iv. 1. *sais, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God.* And he gives this very good reason for it, *For many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

All faithful ministers will lay before the people what they apprehend to be agreeable to *right reason*, and the *holy scriptures*. But, as ministers are all fallible, they

they will direct the people to search for themselves, and not to take things upon trust from them, or from their parents, or other teachers. And they will always value the few that examine and think, with seriousness and attention, more than those, who, with a blind and implicate faith, adhere to the prejudices of education, or fall in lazily with the popular opinions; — though their numbers were so great as that, with the soles of their feet, they could drie up rivers.

The punishment of this prophet may teach you not to regard what every man tells you, in matters of religion, how solemnly soever he deliver it; but to search for your selves, and to withhold your assent, in all cases, where you have not sufficient evidence. But then, on the other hand, let me caution you against indulging a spirit of cavilling, and endless scepticism. There is a sort of men, who cannot distinguish between *liberty* and *licentiousness*; who endeavor to make themselves famous, by eternal disputing, and calling every thing in question; who will never acknowledge themselves convinced,

SERM. though the superior and prevailing evi-

IV.

dence is against them. They do, indeed, pretend to examine all things, but then they hold fast nothing; no, not even that which is good. Their whole study is to unhinge mens minds, and root out their religious principles; without giving them something as good in their stead. These persons pretend to *freedom of thought*, and unbiaſſed inquiry; but they are, generally, *half-thinkers*, and *bigots*; or persons, who determine without evidence, and a cool, ſincere, and thorough examination. To ſuch I would earneſtly recommend it, not to reject *revelation*, without a proper inquiry; and long, laborious examination. — as I would caution others againſt *credulity*, or believing raſhly, and without evidence.

4. *Laſtly*. “How dangerous a thing “is it to tranſgreſſe the command of “God, in any inſtance?” If God ſpared not his own prophet, what had *Jeroboam*, and the *lying prophet* to expect at his hands?

Men of vice may be ſpared for a while; but the puniſhment of the future world

is

Slain by a lion.

133

SERM.

IV.

is not lesse real, nor lesse terrible, for being deferred. — The multitude phansy, that they can find happinesse in sin: and therefore, they venture upon one criminal action, and another, and so on; and then they tamper with their consciences, and try to bring them over to favor their vices. But it will not do. *Sin* is the misery of man; and, unlesse they forsake it, it will prove their ruine. Whereas, keeping the commandments of God, and perseverance therein, is so necessary, so essential to our happinesse, that (suppose God would give us leave to break any of them, — which yet he will never do; but suppose he would) we could not break any of his commandments, without hurting ourselves, and contributing so far to our own misery. Whatever, therefore, upon the most careful examination, you find to be the command of God, whether of a moral, or positive nature, you ought speedily and diligently to comply with it. *Eternity is depending upon your present behavior!* And, if you search with diligence and candor, and humbly and earnestly pray to God, to lead and guide you

SERM. in his most holy ways. And if, in pro-

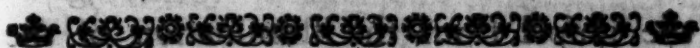
IV. portion to the increase of your knowlege,
 you manifest that you love God, by keep-
 ing his commandments, — you may, upon
 the surest grounds, look for the blessed
 hope, and the appearance of the glory of
 the great God, and of our savior Jesus
 Christ, when he cometh as universal
 judge. For then he will be the author
 of eternal salvation unto all those that
 have obeyed his commands.

*And God grant that we may all be of
 that happy number. Amen!*





S E R M O N V.



The spiritual (not the animal) man,
disposed to receive the gospel.

The first sermon on this text.

I COR. ii. 14:

*But the natural man receiveth not
the things of the spirit of God:
for they are foolishnesse unto him;
neither can he know them, because
they are spiritually discerned.*



THE false apostle, at Corinth, SERM.
was a Jew, of some dis- V,
tinction; who made great
pretences to the philoso-
phy, and eloquence, of the
Greeks; but was in reality a bad man,
and a deceiver. St. Paul, on the other
K 4 hand,

SERM. hand, made no use of the philosophy, or
 V. eloquence of the *Greeks*; but honestly
 taught the pure, simple doctrine of Christ;
 without intermixing the *Pagan* philosophy, or aiming at the rhetorical manner of the schools. He had his knowledge of the gospel from the illumination of the spirit of God, and his mission was supported by miracles; that their faith might not be grounded on the wisdom of men, but upon the wisdom and power of God.

1 Cor. ii. 6, &c. “ *Nevertheless (sais he) we speak wisdom among those who are perfect; i. e. those, who are perfectly acquainted with the nature and evidence of our doctrine, discern it to be the highest wisdom. However, it is not the wisdom of this world, but of the world to come; it is not the wisdom of the Jewish age, or Mosaic constitution, but of the gospel age, or dispensation; neither is it the wisdom of the princes of this world, or of the leading men of the Jewish nation, which will shortly come to nothing. For their state and polity are soon to be abolished. — But we speak the wisdom of God in*

disposed to receive the gospel.

137

“ in a mystery ; even the hidden wisdom, SERM.
“ which God ordained *before this world* ; V.
“ or (as the original words signifie) *before* Προ τῆς
“ *the secular ages*, i. e. before the *Jewish* αἰωνῶν.
“ constitution, or jubilees, took place.
“ God had, so long ago, determined to
“ revele the gospel to mankind, in the
“ proper season. *But none of the princes*
“ *of this world* ; but a few comparatively
“ of the *Jewish rulers*, understood the
“ prophecies ; or expected a spiritual,
“ suffering *Messiah*. For surely had they
“ known it, they would not have cruci-
“ fied the Lord of glory. But I may ex-
“ presse this, in allusion to the words of
“ the prophet *Isaiab*, *The things, which* Isaiab
“ *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither* lxiv. 4.
“ *hath it entered into the heart of man to*
“ *imagine ; those very things God hath pre-*
“ *pared for them that love him.* But,
“ though this extraordinary favor to
“ mankind was hid from the princes of
“ the *Jewish nation*, yet God hath reveled
“ it to us, by his spirit ; which spirit
“ knoweth the secret things of God, as
“ clearly as the spirit of a man knoweth
“ the

SERM. " the secret thoughts and intentions of

V. " the man's own mind.

~~~~~  
 v. 12, " Now, we have received, not the spirit  
 &c. " of this world; to lead us, with worldly  
 " views, to promote the notions of the  
 " Jewish Rabbies, or the philosophy and  
 " eloquence of the Greeks; — but the  
 " spirit, which is from God, a spiritual  
 " and divine temper of mind, that we  
 " might be fit for divine illumination, or  
 " might know the things, which are freely  
 " imparted unto us, by the favor and boun-  
 " ty of God. Which things also we speak,  
 " not in the affected language, taught by  
 " human philosophy, or eloquence; but  
 " in such plane, simple, unaffected lan-  
 " guage, as the spirit directs us to; *sute-*  
 " *ing, or adapting, spiritual things, to spi-*  
 " *ritual persons.* Our common translation  
 " has it, *comparing spiritual things with*  
 " *spiritual.* But perhaps the more proper  
 " rendering of the Greek would be, *sute-*  
 " *ing, or adapting, spiritual things to*  
 " *spiritual persons; speaking in so plane*  
 " and unaffected a manner, as well-dis-  
 " posed persons do most of all approve.  
 " — But the natural, [i. e. the animal,

" or

*disposed to receive the gospel.*

139

“ or sensual ] man, receiveth not the things SERM.  
“ of the spirit of God ; for they are fool- V.  
“ ishnesse to him : neither can he know  
“ them, because they are spiritually dis-  
“ cerned : i. e. it requires a good dispo-  
“ sition of mind to receive and relish the  
“ truths contained in the gospel ; and the  
“ animal, or sensual, man is destitute of  
“ that disposition. *But the spiritual,* v. 15.  
“ or well-minded, *man discerneth all*  
“ *things.* He is a proper judge of the  
“ nature and evidence, of the worth and  
“ great excellence, of the doctrine of the  
“ gospel, *Though he himself is judged, or*  
“ *discerned, of no man :* The excellence  
“ of his disposition of mind cannot be  
“ properly judged of, or truly discerned,  
“ by any other person, who is a merely  
“ animal, or sensual, man.”

This seems to have been intended by the apostle, concerning himself, and by way of reflection upon the false apostle, who condemned St. Paul, as a deceiver, and opposed the doctrine which he preached. He, therefore adds, “ For  
“ who hath known the mind of the Lord ?  
“ or, who will instruct him ? By [him] in  
“ this

SERM. " this last v. Mr. *Locke* understands

V. " *the spiritual man*, as thinking that no-

body, pretending to be a *christian*,

" would be so arrogant as to take upon

" him to instruct *the Lord*. But we find

Isaiah

xl. 13,

14.

" the prophet thus inquiring, *Who hath*

" directed the spirit of the Lord? or, be-

" ing his counsellor, hath taught him?

" With whom took he council? and who

" instructed him? and taught him in the

" path of judgment? and taught him

" knowlege? and shewed to him the way

" of understanding? And, by way of

" allusion to these words of the prophet,

Rom. xi.

34.

" St. *Paul* inquires, *Who hath known the*

" mind of the Lord? or who hath been his

" counsellor? Which he, in this place,

" expresses, with very little variation,

" *Who hath known the mind of the Lord?*

" or, *Who will instruct him?* Is it most

" likely that the *sensual*, or *spiritual*, man

" should know the mind of the Lord?

" If the sensual man, that is the false

" apostle, should say, *That he knows the*

" mind of the Lord, I can assure him, that

" he contradicts the Lord, and preaches

" a quite contrary doctrine to that which

" I



*disposed to receive the gospel.*

141

“ I have received of the Lord. What, SERM.  
“ then, will he take upon him to teach, V.  
“ or instruct, *the Lord*? This he in effect  
“ does, when he sets himself in direct  
“ opposition to us, the true apostles, and  
“ faithful prophets of the Lord. *For we*  
“ *have the mind of Christ.*”

In discoursing on this subject, it is proposed,

I. To explain the words, that are more difficult and hard to be understood. And,

II. To show what observations they will afford us, when rightly explained.

I. It is proposed to explain the words that are more difficult and hard to be understood.

In the text, here is mention made of *the natural man*, who is set in direct opposition to the *spiritual man*, mentioned in the foregoing and following verses. It will, therefore, be proper to consider the meaning of both these phrases; as, by their opposition, they will help mutually to explain and give light to one another.

The word, which is here translated *[the natural man,]* signifies properly the <sup>ψυχικὸς</sup> <sup>not</sup> <sup>φυσικὸς</sup>  
*animal,*

SERM. *animal*, or *sensual* man; one, who principally regards the interest and gratification of the mere *animal* life. Some of the antients used to divide a man into three parts, viz. *body, soul, and spirit*.

1 Thess. v. 23. And St. Paul hath sometimes followed that distinction. As to the meaning of the word [*body*,] that is clear and evident.

ψυχὴ By *the soul*, they meant the *sensitive soul*, or the *animal* nature of man, the seat of the passions and appetites, which God hath planted in brutes, as well as in men.

πνεῦμα And, by *the spirit*, the rational part of man, the seat of understanding or conscience; by which we are distinguished from the brutes; being thereby rendered capable of moral virtue and of religion. Now, as ψυχὴ meant the *animal*, or *sensitive*, part of our frame, ψυχικὸς meant the *animal* or *sensual* man. And, in this sense, the word is always used in the new Testament. Thus the wisdom from beneath is termed *earthly* and *sensual*; as well as *devilish*, or *dæmoniac*. And, of some wicked persons, who had once made a credible profession of christianity, it is said, "*These are they, who separate*  
" *them-*

James  
iii. 15.

Jude  
v. 19.

*disposed to receive the gospel.*

143

“ *themselves, (i. e. from the churches, SERM.  
“ or societies, of true christians: and V.  
“ they are) sensual; not having the spirit.”* 

They were devoted to their lusts, and followed the dictates of *sense* and appetite; but would not be guided by the understanding, or conscience, the superior and rational part of their frame. — What, therefore, is translated the *natural*, ought to have been the *animal*, or *sensual* man.

By the *spiritual* man; we are to understand, not one who was governed by the *animal* nature, or *sensitive* soul; but by *the spirit*, the understanding, or conscience. Accordingly, the *apostle* declared, *that he adapted spiritual things to spiritual* v. 13. *persons*; where, by *spiritual persons*, seems plainly to be meant *well-minded persons*, who loved truth in its most simple dresse; and preferred it to the technical terms of the philosophers, or the eloquence of the orators.

And, in our text, the *sensual* man is represented as incapable of receiving, knowing, and approving of, the things of the spirit of God; *because they are spiritually discerned*: i. e. it requires a good  
dis-



SERM. disposition of mind to discern, and relish  
 V. such truths, as lead to piety and universal  
 ~~~~~ righteousness.

These two characters are further explained, in the following chapter; where
 ch. iii. v. the apostle saith, "And I, brethren, could
 1. &c. "not speak unto you, as unto *spiritual*
 " (or well-minded) persons; but as unto
 " *carnal* persons;" — such as, in our
 text, are called *animal*, or *sensual*. For
 so the word is explained; as denoting a
 temper, which led to envy, contention, and
 division. And elsewhere, by *spiritual*
men, the apostle intended the pious, and
 Gal. vi. well-disposed; when he saith, "Brethren,
 1. "if any man (*any brother christian*) be
 " overtaken in a fault, you, who are
 " *spiritual* men, restore such a one in the
 " spirit of meekness; considering your-
 " selves, lest you also be tempted."

If therefore, by the *animal*, or *sensual*
 man, we understand a man, who leads
 a mere animal life; who is governed by
 his senses and appetites, and enslaved to
 earthly things. And, by the *spiritual*
 man, one who is under the direction of

con-

disposed to receive the gospel.

145

conscience, or governed by the superior SERM.
and rational part of his frame; and there-
by prepared to receive the pure gospel of
Christ; to relish it, and to be influenced
by it; — we shall have a clear view of
these two characters, and of the differ-
ent sorts of men thereby intended: And
may easily discern the great force and
propriety of the apostle's argument, in the
text and context.

V.

II. The observations, which arise from
the words, thus explained, are such as
follow.

I. The apostle does, by no means, re-
present all mankind as *naturally* wicked;
— if, by *nature*, we understand that state,
in which they were formed; or in which
men are, as they come out of the hands
of God.

As we are all, by *nature*, the workman-
ship of God, we are all excellently well
made. He hath formed our bodies in a
curious and wonderful manner, and digni-
fied us with rational spirits. There is no
part of our frame, but what is wisely
made; no power or faculty; no appetite,

L

passion,

SERM. passion, or affection in us, but what hath
 V. been planted in us, by infinite wisdom ;
 and may be made use of, or gratified, in
 a proper kind, measure, or degree. *Truth*
 is so *natural* to us, that it sits upon our
 lips, is the first thing which occurs, and
 is ready to break out, upon all occasions :
 and it would always be made use of, if
 we had not some concealed, low, and un-
 worthy pursuit in view. *Justice, hu-*
manity, and beneficence, are, likewise, *na-*
tural to us. And fraud, cruelty and un-
 kindnesse, quite unnatural and base.

Some may imagine, that the sensible
 appetites are the corruptions of our na-
 ture, and necessarily lead men into vice.
 But they are, in reality, no more than like
 many external objects, that is *temptations*
 but not *sin*. Our first parents, in a state
 of innocence, had such sensible appetites ;
 therefore, they are not *naturally*, and in
 themselves, evil. But they will, indeed,
 lead us into what is evil, if they are not
 under the direction of reason, or con-
 science, which is planted in us, on pur-
 pose to govern the animal part of our
 frame ; to controul the passions, to regu-
 late

late the appetites, to direct the kind, the SERM.
measure, and the degree, in which it is V.
reasonable to gratifie or indulge them. 

The right use of them is *virtue*, as the wrong use of them is *vice*. — If, therefore, it be *natural* for man to be a reasonable creature, it is the most *natural* use, he can make of his reason, to be influenced by it; and to live a pious, beneficent and temperate life; making conscience of his duty both towards God, his neighbor, and himself.

It is true, St. Paul saies, *We were all by* Eph. ii.
nature children of wrath, even as others. The 3.
Syriac version, and some of the antient interpreters, understood St. Paul, as meaning, by *nature*, *planely*, *really*, or *truly*; or that they were *really* and *truly* the children of wrath. But several of the modern interpreters think, he might there mean, not *that nature* which God gave them in creation; but that custom, or second nature, which the *idolatrous* and vicious part of mankind had brought upon themselves, by chosen and voluntary acts of sinning; and in which, they educated their children, from their infancy. For the

SERM. apostle sais, *They in times past walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which still worked in the children of disobedience. Having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh; and fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the spirit. And that they were by nature, the children of wrath, even as others. They were so, formerly, like other heathens; but did not continue to be so, after they became Christians. For whoever will carefully read that epistle, will easily perceive, that the apostle is there speaking of such christians, as had first been idolatrous gentiles. Though, according to his usual, obliging, and modest stile, he, as apostle of the gentiles, ranks himself among them (a).*

But that St. Paul did not look upon all mankind, as *by nature*, unholy and wicked, appears plainly, from what he sais of himself, and other Jewish christians, — *We, who are Jews by nature; and not sinners of the Gentiles.* So that, though he

G¹. ii.
15.

(a) Thus Homer has represented *Ulysses*, as saying [*we all;*] when strictly speaking, he himself could not be included. *Hom. Iliad. B. l. 194.*

disposed to receive the gospel.

149

he speaks of the *Gentiles*, as *sinners by nature*; yet he planely intimates that the *Jews* were *by nature holy*. They were descended from an holy seed, or from persons set apart to be holy unto the Lord: And the *Gentiles*, from a wicked and abandoned race; who were sunk into the depths of ignorance, idolatry, and vice; and who brought up their children in the same wicked manner.

SERM.

V.

And, if the apostle had had occasion, he would have spoken in the same manner of the descendents of *Christians*, as he did of *Jews*; [*We, who are christians by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.*] For *Christians* are now, as the *Jews* were of old, *a people holy unto the Lord*. Nay, St. Paul does actually speak, of the children of *Christians*, in this very language; where he intimates, that, if either of the parents be a christian, it is sufficient to denominate their children *an holy seed*; “If ¹ Cor. “neither of you were christians, then ^{vii.} 14. “would your children be unclean: but now “(sais he) *they are holy*:” i. e. The children of *Christians* were *an holy seed*. They were *Christians by nature, and not sinners of*
L 3 the

SERM. *the Gentiles* ; because they were descended

V. from *christian* parents, who were themselves dedicated unto holiness, and dedicated their children to be *holy unto the Lord*.

From all this, you may see, that those, who were *Gentiles by nature*, were persons descended from *idolatrous* heathens ; who, by long custom, had contracted very bad habits. For custom is often called *second nature*. And we say, *That it is the nature of a bad man, or a great and old offender, to do wickedly*. By which we do not mean, that he is forced so to do ; but that he has voluntarily contracted such bad habits, by repeated acts of sinning, as render it very difficult for him to cease from doing wickedly.

I do, indeed, acknowledge that man is *a fallen creature*. That our first parents fell from their innocence and immortality. *That*, by that *original sin* of theirs, in eating the forbidden fruit, there was introduced into this world, and came upon all mankind, labor and sorrow, corruption and death. But let us not condemn what is *natural*. As for all vice, it is *unnatural*.

disposed to receive the gospel.

151

natural. For the God of nature made SERM.
men right ; but they themselves have vo- V.
luntarily departed from what is right, and
have found out many sinful inventions.

ST. PAUL, in the text, represents an *animal*, or sensual man, as unprepared to *receive the things of the spirit of God*, and as *accounting them foolishness* : nay, as incapable of *knowing*, that is approving, of *them ; because they are spiritually discerned*. But he evidently supposes that was the fault of the animal, or sensual, man ; and that he had, of himself and voluntarily, contracted such bad habits, as were the most *unnatural* and unreasonable ; and therefore justly to be condemned.

The other observations must be deferred to the next opportunity.

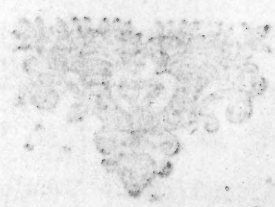


disposed to receive the Gospel.

154 natural. For the God of nature made
man right; but they themselves have vol-
untarily departed from what is right, and
have found out many sinful inventions.

St. Paul, in the text represents an
animal, or sensual man, as unprepared to
receive the things of the Spirit of God, and
as accounting them foolish: nay, as in-
capable of knowing, that is approving, of
them; because they are spiritually discern-
ed. But he evidently supposes, that was
the fault of the animal, or sensual, man;
and that he had, of himself and volun-
tarily, contracted such bad habits as were
the most unwearied and unchangeable; and
therefore justly to be condemned.

The other objections must be referred
to the next opportunity.





S E R M O N VI.



The spiritual (not the animal) man,
disposed to receive the gospel.

The second sermon on this text.

I COR. ii. 14.

*But the natural man receiveth not
the things of the spirit of God:
for they are foolishnesse unto him;
neither can he know them, because
they are spiritually discerned.*



IN treating of this subject, the SERM.
VI.
method proposed, was,

I. To explaine the words
of the text, which are more
difficult and hard to be understood.

II. To shew what observations they
will afford us, when rightly explained.

The

SERM. The words were explained, in a former discourse; in which it was shown
 VI. that, *by the natural*, is meant the animal, or sensual, man. And, *by the spiritual*, the well-minded, or well-disposed man.

The second head was begun with; and the first observation mentioned, and enlarged upon; *viz.* That the apostle does, by no means, represent men as naturally wicked; if, *by nature*, we understand that state, in which they were formed; or in which men are, as they come out of the hands of God.

We now procede to other observations,

2. From the text, thus explained, according to the evident scope and meaning of the sacred writer, we may observe,
 “ that, *by the things of the spirit of God*,
 “ the apostle did not intend a mystical,
 “ allegorical meaning of the old Testament, quite different from the literal
 “ sense, which the *natural* man could not
 “ receive and understand; but which was
 “ reveled to the *spiritual* man, after a
 “ secret and spiritual manner.”

One of the advocates for infidelity, has expressed himself thus, “ *The apostle Paul*
 “ —seems

disposed to receive the gospel.

155

“ — seems to disclaim all other methods SERM.
“ of arguing, besides the *allegorical*; VI.
“ when he saith, that *the wisdom*, he spoke,
“ was *wisdom among them that were per-*
“ *fect*; i. e. among them, who under-
“ stood the secret, spiritual and mystical
“ sense of things; — the secret, divine,
“ and spiritual sense of *Judaism*; which
“ the world, that interpreted *Judaism*
“ literally, knew nothing of: that this
“ wisdom, or method of discourse, or
“ reasoning, was reveled to him, and the
“ other apostles, by God, who alone *knew*
“ his own spiritual meaning; and that
“ *the natural man receives not* the spiritual
“ sense of things, *for they are foolishnesse*
“ *unto him, and cannot be known by him,*
“ *because* they are not to be discerned by
“ the common rules of *wisdom*, or *phi-*
“ *losophy*, or *disputing*; but are to be dis-
“ cerned, only by a man, who has the
“ secret, *spiritual*, or mystical meaning of
“ things; or the rules, by which to find
“ it out, imparted to him [*of*] God. —
“ So that — all other methods of reason-
“ ing, except that manner of reasoning,
“ used by the apostles, and particularly
by

SERM. " by St. Paul [seem] to be wholly dis-

IV. " carded, and the allegorical reasoning

~ " to be set up by them, as the true and

" only reasoning, proper to bring all men

" to the *faith* of CHRIST : and the Gen-

" tiles were to be wholly beat out of the

" literal way of arguing, and to argue as

" became *Jews*. And the event of preach-

" ing the gospel, has been suited to mat-

" ters considered in this view and light,

1 Cor. i. " For we know that *the wise* did not re-
26. ceive the gospel at first, and that they

" were the latest converts ; which plane-

" ly arose from their using maxims of

" reasoning, and disputing, wholly oppo-

" site to those of christians."

" This is the talk of *infidels*, who would

" gladly persuade the world, " That *Chris-*

" tianity has no foundation in *reason*, or

" in the *scriptures* of the old Testament.

" That *Jesus Christ*, and *his apostles*, made

" use of bad arguments, and groundlesse

" interpretations of *Moses*, and the *pro-*

" *phets*. And that the *christian religion*,

" has nothing to support it, but such idle,

" phansiful conceits; and ridiculous, ab-

" surd interpretations."

Whereas

disposed to receive the gospel.

157

Whereas, this is all calumny and mis-
representation : and has no foundation,
either in our text, or in any other part
of holy scripture. For, by *the things of
the spirit of God*, the apostle does not
mean the secret, mystical, or allegorical
sense of the old Testament ; but the plane
and clear revelation of the *new*. And, by
the natural, or *animal* man, not the ra-
tional, but the *sensual* or wicked man :
who, for that very reason, and even be-
cause he was a *sensual* man, *received not
the things of the spirit of God, but ac-
counted the gospel doctrine foolishness ; be-
cause it is to be spiritually discerned ; or be-
cause it requires, in some degree, a love
of truth and righteousness, to discern the
excellent nature, and duely attend to the
glorious evidence, of it.*

*A religion, whose morals are the most
pure and perfect, whose doctrines and in-
stitutions are evidently in aid of moral
virtue ; and which was planted by such
external attestations, as literal prophecies
punctually accomplished, and real and
beneficent miracles, worked openly and
in great numbers ; — such a revelation
has the best grounds and reasons that can*

be

SERM. be named. And all rational and well-dis-

VI. disposed persons; all wise men, who are
 really such, will attend to, and discern,
 the nature and importance of such a re-
 velation; and receive it with gratitude,
 and be influenced by it. But, as to the
 vicious, the *animal* or sensual, man; and
 those, who make boasting pretensions to
 wisdom, but are not really wise; it is no
 wonder that such account the gospel *fool-
 ishness*, and *receive not the things of the
 spirit of God*. For they are *spiritually dis-
 cerned*, and can be relished by none but
 the virtuous, or well disposed.

3. There is no occasion for every man's
 being inspired, in order to find out the
 right sense of holy scripture, or the truth
 and reasonableness of the christian re-
 ligion.

For, when the apostle declares, *that
 the natural* (i. e. the animal or sensual)
*man receiveth not the things of the spirit of
 God; but accounteth them foolishness: and
 that he cannot know them, because they are
 spiritually discerned*; — he does not mean
 that, besides the plain, single sense of
 scripture, (that one sense which is agree-
 able to the context; and to be found, by
 a care-

a careful examination of the words) there is also a secret, spiritual, or mystical meaning, which no man can come at the knowlege of, 'till he is illuminated by inspiration of the spirit of God. For that would have been to have represented the scriptures as of no use, or signification, at all. For (to say the least) it would be as short and easy a way for God to inspire me with the knowlege of any truth, without my reading *the scriptures*; as to inspire me to find out that same truth, in a book that would otherwise be unintelligible to me. SERM. VI.

If it was true, that none but inspired persons could, to any purpose, read or study the scriptures; what must others do? For, if such inspired persons should give us a commentary upon the sacred writings, the query is, "Whether we should
" not want a new inspiration, in order to
" understand their commentary; and so
" on, without end?" But surely, such notions would furnish, with invincible arguments, those who are inclined to reject the scriptures; as well as those who would make them *a dead letter*, and of
no

SERM. no use or value, without the immediate
 VI! inspiration of the spirit : as likewise those,
 who represent the scriptures *as a nose of wax*, that may be turned any way at pleasure ; or *unsensed letters*, which have no meaning at all, till the catholic church (i. e. *the church of Rome*) puts a meaning upon them.

Besides ; we know the fact to be otherwise ; and that men, without inspiration, have, by diligent study and close application, made a wonderful progress in the knowledge of the sacred writings. And *protestants* have, very justly, and with great strength of argument, pleaded for the sufficiency of the holy scriptures, and for their plainness and intelligibleness in all things essential to salvation ; — when they have been condemning *the church of Rome*, for taking the scriptures out of the hands of the common people, and prohibiting their reading the doctrine of life, as represented in the sacred oracles of truth.

Let us take care to state our arguments so, as to be clear of all just objections ; and to hold against all persons and parties, otherwise there is some reason to suspect that,

disposed to receive the gospel.

161

that, either our arguments are not good; SERM.
or that we do not thoroughly understand VI.
them, and make the best of them. }

Here is nothing said, by the apostle, of a constant and particular revelation, imparted separately and supernaturally to every Christian; or of infusing faith, or inspiring conviction; or rendering every believer infallible. Or any thing like an insinuation, That christianity is not founded on argument; or that it is destitute of such evidence, as, if attended to, would produce a rational faith. And finally, it was far from the apostle's intention to insinuate, that a man, by the right use of his reason, could not understand the scriptures, in their true, proper, and spiritual meaning; nor perceive the grounds and reasons of the christian faith. — Though he did design to say, that an *animal*, or sensual, man wants the proper temper of mind, to inquire after, and relish, truths of the highest importance.

4. When the *animal*, or sensual, man reforms, and becomes an holy (or *spiritual*) man, his old understanding is not taken out of him, and a new one put in; or

M

any

SERM. any other faculty superadded, in order
 VI. to his knowing and discerning spiritual
 things.

These and the like observations have
 * See *Es-* been made, from the words of our text^a.
says moral But the apostle himself intended no such
and philo- thing. It is the same understanding, that
sophical, is abused, whilst a man continues an *ani-*
 P. 83. *mal*, or *sensual*, man; and that is made the
 right use of, and duely improved, when
 he becomes an holy or *spiritual* man. It
 is one and the same understanding in
 man, which perceives the objects of rea-
 son and of faith, that judges of the things
 of men, and of the things of God, of
 temporal and of spiritual objects. When
 the revelation is first made known to him,
 then new discoveries are presented to his
 old understanding. And, when the gos-
 pel has its proper effect, it changes an ani-
 mal, or sensual, man into an holy or spi-
 ritual man; and teaches us the worth and
 excellence of spiritual and everlasting
 things.

5. It is true, and readily acknowledged,
 that the rational man could not, by his
 own understanding and study, have found
 out

out the plan of the gospel : for the gospel SERM.
is a matter of pure revelation ^{b.} — That VI.
is true, I say, but it is not the subject, of ^{See Cla-}
which St. Paul is here treating. ^{get a-}
^{gainst}

St. Paul is not, in the text, speaking of ^{Owen ;}
the impossibility of finding out the gospel ^{and}
by *mere reason* ; or of the revelation of the ^{Locke}
gospel unto the apostles of our blessed ^{on the}
^{text.}

Lord : but how it appeared unto the *ani-*
mal or sensual man, after it was reveled
to the apostles ; and, by them, made
known to the rest of mankind. *The*
things of the spirit of God, to the natural
(that is to the animal, or sensual) man,
appeared foolishness. Consequently they
had appeared to him, they had been laid
before him ; and he rejected them. But,
if he had duely attended, he might have
understood them, and been greatly profit-
ed by them. If he had cultivated the
spiritual and virtuous disposition of mind,
he would have understood and relished
them. And it was his own fault that he
had not that right disposition of mind.

6. The apostle Paul has, in our text,
assigned the plane reason, why the *animal*
man received not the things of the spirit

SERM. of God, but accounted them *foolishness*;

VI. and could not know them, — *viz.* because he was a mere *animal* man, and they are *spiritually discerned*.

The doctrine of the crosse is foolishness unto those that *are lost*; i. e. who are lost to all sense of virtue, or abandoned to vice. But unto *the saved*; that is to the reformed, or virtuous and well-disposed, the doctrine of the gospel appears to be the wisdom of God; and the miracles, worked in support of it, to be the power of God.

1 Cor. i.
18, &c.

A love of riches and temporal grandeur inflamed the great men; and philosophy and eloquence, the men of science; so that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble and high-borne persons imbraced the gospel, at its first appearance; and before the wealth and splendor of the world attended the profession of it. Instead of that, it was a doctrine almost every where spoken against. The apostles preached the most rational and excellent doctrine, and supported it by abundant evidence: but criminal prejudices, and an excessive love of this world
and

and of animal gratifications, closed mens SERM.
eyes, stoped their ears, and hardened VI.
their hearts, against the best scheme of
religion that ever appeared in the world;
and stired up some most virulently to op-
pose them, and even to seek their lives,
and thirst after their blood.

It is not easy to say what lengths vicious men will go, when they are determined against submitting to truth and evidence. They will misrepresent truth, and hardly scruple any methods to support error and vice; or to bring about their own mean, low, and fordid purposes. Let us, therefore, take heed and beware of the first beginings of vice, lest it grow up to such a degree, as to bar all the avenues of our minds against truth, and cause us to lose all love of it, and relish for it. This is the condemnation that, when light hath John iii.
darted its bright beams among men, so 19, 20.
many of them love darknesse better than light, merely because their deeds are evil. For every one, that doeth evil, hateth the light; neither doth he choose to come into the light, lest his dark deeds should be thereby discovered and reprov'd.

SERM. It is incredible how much an *animal*
 VI. temper, a sensual disposition, biases mens
 minds, and renders them unfit to inquire
 into moral and religious truths. This is
 frequently taken notice of, in scripture.
 And nothing can be of more importance,
 than to warn men against living in vice,
 openly or secretly. For that blinds their
 minds, and makes them afraid, or un-
 willing, to find out those truths, which
 condemn their temper of mind, and those
 criminal actions which they will not for-
 sake.

7. *Lastly*, " We may here observe the
 " plane reason, why the *spiritual* man
 " receives the things of the spirit of God,
 " viz. because he is a *spiritual* (or well-
 " disposed) man, and *they are spiritually*
 " *discerned*,"

A love of truth and righteousness is
 the proper seed-plot for knowledge, and
 every other excellence. A well-disposed
 mind can attend to evidence, and is de-
 sirous to find out truth, to submit to it,
 and to be influenced by it. This is the
 voice of reason. This, the doctrine both
 of the old Testament and of the new.--*The*

disposed to receive the gospel.

167

meek will be guide in judgment, and the SERM.
meek will be teach his way. — None of the VI.
wicked shall understand; but the wise (that Dan. xii.
is, the righteous) shall understand. — He, 10.
that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that John iii.
his deeds may be made manifest, that 21.
they are wrought in God, or according to
the will of God. — If any man will do his
will, [i. e. the will of God;] he shall know
of the doctrine of the gospel; whether it be
of God, or whether Christ [invented it, and]
spoke of himself. — For to be carnally-mind-Rom.
ed, is death; but to be spiritually-minded, viii, 6;
is life and peace. Because the carnal mind &c.
is enmity to God. For it is not subject to
the law of God, neither (continuing such)
can it be subject thereto. So then they,
that are in the flesh, cannot please God. But
you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; if
so be that the spirit of God dwell in you.
Whereas, if any man have not the spirit of
Christ, he is none of his. — God never sends 2 Thess.
men strong delusions, that they should believe ii. 11, 12.
a lie; till they have manifested that they
have no love to truth, but take pleasure in
unrighteousnesse.

M 4

What

SERM. What is it, that makes the loose, the

VI.  gay, and unthinking part of mankind to treat christianity with so much contempt and aversion; but that they want the humble, the *spiritual*, or well-disposed frame of mind; which would lead them to examine, before they reject it? It is very hard to find persons raising objections against *the bible*, who have never read it, quite through, with any tolerable care and attention. Whoever has any real scruples, cannot be just to christianity and to himself, if he ridicules, or rejects it, before he has made a long and careful examination; and inquired whether his objections may not be removed, and his scruples shown to be unjust and groundlesse.

The *spiritual* man will make a right use of his reason, and soberly examine the nature and evidences of true religion; in order to discharge his present duty, and obtain the transcendent felicity, which the gospel promises to all the faithful. But the *animal* man is afraid of some truths, and therefore unwilling to receive them. — The reason and fitness of things requires

disposed to receive the gospel.

169

quires of every man, to *deny himself of all* SERM.
ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, and to lead a VI.
sober, righteous and godly life.

Christianity requires the same, as the will of God, and under the awful prospect of a righteous judgment to come. And, if any man leads a wicked life, and cavils at the christian religion, there is the greatest reason to suspect, that *he receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, but accounteth them foolishnesse*; because he is an animal, or sensual, man. He finds fault with the gospel, not because it wants evidence, but because it has too much evidence for him to be easy in his vices; or because its precepts are too strict, and he has nothing to hope for, but every thing to fear, if christianity should at last prove true. Take the internal and the external evidence all together; and surely it must be allowed to be an overballance to all that has, as yet, appeared against it.

Let us, who still professe ourselves christians, cherish the humble, spiritual, and well-disposed temper of mind; that we may clearly discern the evidence of our holy religion, come at the true sense
of

SERM. of sacred scripture, and keep the faith
 VI. pure and undefiled. Let us also take the
 greatest care to live and act according to
 the most excellent rules of christianity.

It will be of very little service to any
 of us to *believe* right, unlesse we be also
 careful to live *right*. For there is a so-
 lemn day approaching, when *the infidel*
 shall not be able to hold up his head;
 and when *the wicked christian* shall, like-
 wise, be put to shame and confusion of
 face, and perish with a most aggravated
 condemnation. *In that day*, God will
 render unto every man according to the
 deeds, which he hath done in the body,
 or during this life: That is, he will re-
 ward the righteous, but condemn the
 wicked and impenitent to that exemplary
 punishment which they so justly deserve.

Oh my friends, *remember that final and
 decisive day!* Live in the believing views
 of it; *and be diligent*, in the practice of
 piety and virtue, *that you may be found of
 your judge, in that day, in peace, without
 spot, and blamelesse!*



S E R M O N VII.



The absurd nature of *transubstantiation*.

The first Sermon on this text.

I COR. xi. part of the 24th verse.

*This is my body, which is broken
for you. —*



W H E N the Jews eat the SERM.
paschal lamb, they were VII.
said to eat the *passover*, or
the *body of the passover*. By
which, they understood the
lamb, which was eat, as a memorial of
God's *passing over* the houses of the *Israe-*
lites, when he slew the first-born of every
family

SERM
VII.

family in *Egypt*. So, likewise, when they eat of the unleavened bread, made use of, at the paschal supper, they said, "This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers did eat, in the land of *Egypt*."

Our Lord's disciples were *Jews*, and used to this figurative language. And, when they had just finished the passover-supper, *Jesus* took bread, blessed God, or gave thanks, over it; and distributed it among his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; *This is my body, which is given, or broken, for you. This do in remembrance of me.* i. e. The bread, which I have now taken in my hands, over which I have given thanks to God, which I have broken, and distributed among you, is to represent my body, which is shortly to be broken upon the cross. And this rite, you are to observe, after I am gone from you, in remembrance of me, or of my laying down my life for your redemption."

It would not be a very easy task to reckon up all the *sermons*, which have been preached; and all the *books* and *volumes*, which have been written, to explain

plane the words of our text. But the *SERM?*
apostles, who were used to eastern phrases; *VII!*
 and *Jewish*, figurative expressions, would
 easily understand *our Lord's* meaning.
 And so may we, with a little care and at-
 tention: if we will but make use of *our*
reason; which we ought always to do, in
 studying the sacred scriptures, and find-
 ing out those articles of faith, and rules
 of worship and practice, which are there
 delivered.

But, notwithstanding the words of our
 text are easy and plane, if interpreted in
 a figurative sense; and understood, as they
 stand in their connection; yet many have
 made a shift to misunderstand and mis-
 interpret them. And *the church of Rome*,
 in particular, has contended for the lite-
 ral sense, and does still contend for it. —
 Their sentiments upon this head are so
 surprizingly strange, that I choose to give
 you their opinion, in their own words,
 lest you should suspect me of misrepre-
 senting them. *The decrees of the council*
of Trent, and the *Trent catechism*, are the
 standards of *modern popery*. And, in the
 former of these, it is said, “ By consecrat-
 ing

SERM. "ing of the bread and wine, *Jesus Christ*,

VII. "very God and very man, is really,

~ "truly, and substantially contained un-
 "der the species [*or appearance*] of these
 "sensible signs. And that there is, in
 "this sacrament, a conversion of the
 "whole substance of the bread, into the
 "substance of the body of Christ, and of
 "the whole substance of the wine, into his
 "blood; which conversion the catholic
 "church doeth fitly and properly call
 "*Transubstantiation*. And, if any man
 "shall say that, in the sacrament of the Eu-
 "charist, the substance of bread and wine
 "does remain; and shall deny this won-
 "derful and singular conversion of the
 "whole substance of the bread into the
 "body, and of the whole substance of
 "the wine into the blood, of Christ;
 "the species [*or appearance*] only of
 "bread and wine remaining, which con-
 "version the catholic church calls *Tran-*
 "*substantiation*; — let him be accursed."

This doctrine is yet more particularly
 expressed in the *Trent catechism*; where it
 is said "to be the true body of Christ,
 "which was borne of the virgin, and is

"now

“ now in heaven, together with his soul and SERM.
 “ divinity ; that it is intire in every part of VII.
 “ the bread, and in every drop of the
 “ wine ; that no part of the substance of
 “ bread and wine remain ; that the acci-
 “ dents of bread and wine, which do re-
 “ main, are in no subject ; but exist by
 “ themselves in a wonderful manner,
 “ and which is not too curiously to be
 “ pryed into.”

This interpretation, which the *Romish church* has put upon our text, and the parallel passages in the gospels, is at first sight so ridiculous and absurd, that one can hardly tell how to go about gravely and seriously to confute it. But it is proper, upon some occasions, to *answer a fool according to his folly* ; or to condescend to answer the most idle and silly pretences : especially, when they are represented as of great importance, much insisted upon, and strenuously propagated. In such cases, though the doctrines themselves are the most trifling and absurd, yet their fallacy and absurdity ought sometimes to be laid open, in order to preserve the truth and purity of the gospel ;

to

SERM. to prevent some from being deluded; and

VII. (if possible) to convince those, who are already deluded, of the error of their way.

The protestants have so often, and with such strength, and variety, both of wit and argument, confuted this doctrine of *transubstantiation*; that it is hardly possible to say any thing new upon this head. But the same arguments may be set in different lights, and expressed in different phrases; some of which may fute some persons, and others fute others.

What is proposed at this time, is,

I. To lay before you some of the plainest and strongest arguments against *transubstantiation*. And,

II. To mention several reasons, why we should take some pains clearly and effectually to confute so idle and groundlesse an opinion.

I. It is proposed to lay before you some of the plainest and strongest arguments against *transubstantiation*. And,

1. *The protestant* interpretation of these words, [*This is my body,*] i. e. “this bread is to represent my body,” is wise and

and reasonable; and therefore no other SERM.
interpretation need to be inquired after. VII.

The protestants, with great truth and justnesse, have observed, that there are many other figurative expressions in *scripture*. And therefore, as the literal sense of this text appears absurd, we may here, as justly as in other cases, have recourse to a figurative interpretation. The rule is this, " All texts should be interpreted
" in a literal sense; unlesse that would
" imply some absurdity in itself, or con-
" tradict some other part of sacred scrip-
" ture." Thus, when *Joseph* interpreted the chief butler's dream, He said, " The Gen. xl.
" three branches *are* three days." And, ^{12.}
when he interpreted the chief baker's dream, he said, in like manner, " The v. 18.
" three baskets *are* three days." And,
when he interpreted *Pharoh's* dream, he said, " The seven good kine *are* seven Gen. xli.
" years, and the seven good ears *are* se- ^{26.}
" ven years." When the prophet *Eze-*
kiel saw the vision, of a valley full of dry bones, one came unto him and said,
" Son of Man, These bones *are* the Ezek.
" whole house of *Israel*." In like man- xxxvii.
II.

SERM. ner, *Daniel* said unto *Nebuchadnezzar* the
 VII. King, "Thou *art* this head of Gold."

And again; "These great beasts, which
 Dan. ii. 38. and "are four, *are* four Kings." St. Paul
 vii. 17. used the like phrase, when he said, "This
 Gal. iv. 25. "Hagar *is* mount Sinai in Arabia." And
 St. *John* also, in saying, "The seven
 "heads *are* seven mountains." Now, in
 all these passages, the sign, or memorial,
 is said *to be* the thing signified, or re-
 membered. But how ridiculous would
 it be to interpret such expressions literally,
 and to say, That three branches, or three
 baskets, were turned into three days?
 that seven good kine, or seven ears of
 corn, were really, literally and substanti-
 ally changed into seven years? that *Ne-
 buchadnezzar* the King was actually turn-
 ed into an head of gold, and became
 part of a great image? that four beasts
 were turned into four Kings, or four
 grand monarchies? that *Hagar*, the *Egyp-
 tian* woman, was turned into a moun-
 tain? or that the seven heads of the beast,
 which St. *John* saw in vision, were actu-
 ally and substantially changed into seven
 mountains? But, if we understand such
 expressions

expressions figuratively, and say, that one SERM.
of these things represented the other, the VII.
difficulty immediately vanishes, and the
sacred scriptures become consistent and
intelligible, plane and easy.

Our Lord's ministry was among the
Jews; and therefore he made no scruple
of using their idioms and phrases. Ac-
cordingly, in explaining one of his para-
bles, he said, "The field *is* the world.
"The tares *are* the children of the wick-
"ed one, and the reapers *are* the angels."
In like manner, when he called himself
a door, or *a vine*, and his disciples the
branches. Or, when his apostles called
him *a rock*; we are not to suppose that
Jesus was turned into a door, became
wood, and moved upon hinges: or that
he was really changed into a vine and his
disciples into branches, which grew upon
him and brought forth clusters of excel-
lent grapes: or that he actually petrified,
and became as fixed and immoveable as
a rock. No *Jew* could be so stupid as
to understand such expressions literally;
but would easily perceive that, upon some
accounts, *Jesus* compared himself, or was

SERM. by others compared, to these things. In
 VII. like manner, circumcision was called the
 covenant between *God* and *Abraham*; tho' in reality it was only the sign, or seal, of that covenant. The passover was, strictly and literally speaking, the destroying angel's *passing over* the houses of the *Israelites*, when he slew the first-borne of every family in *Egypt*. Yet the paschal lamb, or the supper eat, every year, in commemoration of that deliverance, was, in Jewish phrase, called *The passover*. And, in the very institution of the Lord's supper, the *Papists* themselves are forced to allow of some figurative expressions. For, when our Lord gave his disciples the wine, he said, "This cup is the
 " New Testament [*or covenant*] in my
 " blood." Now, if the literal sense were kept to there, as well as in the words of our text; then the cup itself (not the wine in the cup, but the cup itself) must be changed literally and substantially (not into the blood of Christ, but) into the New Testament, [*or new covenant.*] In that expression, therefore, the *Papists* are forced to allow, that the cup is, by an
 easy

easy figure, put for the wine in the cup. SERM.
 Just as, when we speak of *drinking a* VII.
glasse, we mean drinking the liquor con-
 tained in the glasse. They are, likewise,
 forced to allow that the wine is not the
 New Testament [*or covenant*] itself, tho'
 declared to be so, as expressly as the bread
 is declared to be Christ's body; or the
 wine, his blood. Now, upon this, the
protestants very justly inquire, " Why
 " do you allow of a figurative interpre-
 " tation of that expression, *This cup is*
 " *the New Testament* [*or covenant*] *in*
 " *my blood*; but because of the absurdi-
 " ties, which would follow, from a lite-
 " ral interpretation? If, then, like absur-
 " dities will follow, from interpreting
 " these other words of the institution,
 " *This is my body*, in a literal sense, you
 " ought also to allow of a figurative in-
 " terpretation here. For there is an
 " equal reason for it; as they are both
 " parts of the same discourse, and equally
 " contained in the words of institution.
 " The one is just as plain and easy as
 " the other, and needs no different ex-
 " planation from the other. And, as

SERM. "the whole form and tenor of the in-
 VII, "stitution is expressed in the figurative
 "manner, they, that allow a figure in
 "the one, ought, by a parity of reason,
 "to allow it in the other."

The figurative sense of our text is plane and obvious, wise and reasonable; whereas the literal sense is obscure and intricate, absurd and unreasonable.

That is the first argument against *transubstantiation*.

2. The doctrine of *transubstantiation* would invalidate the testimony of our senses, and that in cases where the senses are proper judges.

There are two things to be made good, under this head; viz. That substances are to be known only by their properties, or accidents. And that the testimony of our senses may, in many cases, be depended upon.

All that we know, concerning *substances*, is, that they have certain qualities, properties, or accidents; whereby we judge of them, and distinguish them one from another. — Thus we distinguish silver from gold, by the different color, weight, ductility,

ductility, and other properties, or accidents, which we observe in them. In like manner, we distinguish bread and wine from the body and blood of a man. We know nothing of the *substance* of any thing, but by its properties or accidents. And, if the properties, or accidents, are changed, we conclude that the substance is changed. Thus, if glasse, or silver, was so altered as to have the weight, color, ductility, and all the other properties of gold, we should make no scruple to say, it was changed into gold. And thus, when that which was water, a little before, was, by our Lord's miraculous power, so altered, as to have the taste, smell, color, and all the other properties of good wine; the persons, who were present and drank of it, very rationally concluded that the *substance* was changed; and that what was water, not long before, was now really and substantially turned into wine. And, if we could see, and as plainly perceive, that, upon a priest's pronouncing these words, *This is my body*, The bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, were really, truly, and

SERM. substantially changed into the whole and

VII.  intire body and blood of a man, we ought so far to allow of the doctrine of *transubstantiation*: tho' it would be difficult, even then, to prove that they were also changed into the soul and divinity of our Lord. However, if they could go so far, as to work a plane and evident miracle, and change a small piece of bread, and a cup of wine, into the full and perfect body and blood of a full-grown man, one would be much inclined to fall in with their opinion, and not stand with them for little matters; but be so civil as to take the rest for granted, when they had, in a fair and open manner, done so much, in proof of their doctrine. But, as long as the accidents, or properties, of any body remain the same, so long, we very justly conclude, that it is the same body, and not in the least altered or changed. For accidents, or properties, cannot be separated from the substance, so as to exist without it.

As, therefore, the bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, are no more changed, as to their properties, or accidents, after the
the

the consecration of a *Romish* priest, than SERM.
after the prayer of a *Protestant* divine; VII.
but remain exactly the same, as to their
color, softness, fluidity, taste or smell,
and all the other properties, or accidents,
that we can discern in them; we may,
upon the most just, philosophical, and ra-
tional grounds, conclude, that the sub-
stance of them is not changed, but re-
mains exactly the same as before.

Consecration does not alter the substance
of the ground, building, bell-metal, man,
or any other thing, that is consecrated;
why, therefore, should we suppose it to
alter the substance of the bread and wine,
in the Lord's supper; especially as there
is not the least shadow, or appearance, of
a change? They boast "that a *Romish*
" *priest* can every day work a miracle,
" and create God." But, if this be a
miracle; it is a miracle, which any body
may work, as well as a *Romish* priest;
that is to let things remain just as they
were before, without the least appearance,
or evidence, of a change. Or rather it
deserves not the name of a *miracle*; but
is the mere pretence of the most intole-
rable

SERM. rable arrogance and impudence. And

VII. may teach us what to think of all the
 other miracles, pretended to, in the church
 of Rome.

The other part of the present argument, is, *That the testimony of our senses may, in many cases, be depended upon.*

To this, the *Papists* object, " That
 " our senses are not to be trusted, be-
 " cause they often mistake and misrepre-
 " sent things. For instance, the sun,
 " which is a round or globular body,
 " much larger than all this earthly globe,
 " appears to our eyes to be a small plane,
 " not above two or three feet diameter,
 " When we look down from an high
 " tower, or any great eminence, and see
 " men walking below, they appear much
 " less than they really are. So, if we
 " put a straight stick into water, it will
 " appear crooked. If we view an ob-
 " ject through a mist, it will appear
 " bigger; or be so confused, that we can-
 " not distinguish between a statue and a
 " living man. From these and like in-
 " stances, they would infer, that our
 " senses are not to be depended upon.

" And

“ And therefore, though the bread and wine, after consecration, appear to our senses to be bread and wine still; yet they may, for all that, not be bread and wine, but the real flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

SERM.
VII.

To which objection, I would answer, that, when we say, *The testimony of our senses may be depended upon*, we add, *in many cases*. — And this is true in all cases, where the senses are good, the object placed at a due distance, and viewed through a proper medium. A man, who has the jaundice, for instance, may phanſy all things around him are of a yellow color; because the humors of his eye are tinged with that color. But what is that to the sight of those, whose eyes are good, and who labor under no such disorder? It is true, when we are at a great distance, objects appear less; because the angle of vision is altered, and becomes less, proportionably to the distance. And a straight stick in the water appears crooked; because it is seen thro’ a wrong medium, or a medium which alters the reflection of the rays of light upon

SERM. upon our eyes. But how do we come
VII. to know that these objects, in such a
situation, are misrepresented, but by
making trial again, in a different situa-
tion, and through a different medium;
and that with those very same senses? As
things at a great distance always appear
lesse, or viewed through a different me-
dium appear different; we, by the same
senses, make repeted trials; and so learn
to reason justly, and to make allowances
for the distance of an object, or the dif-
ferent medium through which it is view-
ed. For, when objects are placed at a
proper distance, and viewed through a
right medium, we must depend upon
our senses; or else give way to endlesse
perplexity and confusion, diffidence and
scepticism. But it is not to be supposed
that our wise and gracious creator would
form our senses so, as that we should be
under a necessity of being commonly de-
ceived, or deluded, by them. — No; a
sick, or distempered person may, in some
cases, mistake, by reason of his disorder.
And a rash and hasty person may mis-
take, through rashnesse, carelesnesse, or
want

want of due examination. But that the SERM.
 eyes and other senses of mankind should VII.
 commonly delude them, would be a re-
 flection upon the great being, who is
 wise, powerful and good; most evidently
 a lover of his creatures; and one of such
 extensive benevolence, as that he cannot
 possibly take any pleasure in deluding, or
 imposing upon, us. And he, that can
 doubt, when he sees and handles, tastes
 and smells, a small quantity of bread and
 wine, whether it is really bread and wine;
 or whether it is not really and literally
 the body of a full-grown man, in all its
 parts and members, and that in just and
 full proportion, may as justly doubt whe-
 ther there is any such thing as a church
 or building, or any society of men; any
 protestants or any papists; any earth to
 tread upon, or any material world around
 him? Or, whether all is not dream and
 empty vision, and what has no existence,
 but in idea or imagination?

Of such a dangerous tendency is the
 absurd and ridiculous doctrine of *transub-*
stantiation; as it would lead to infidelity
 and universal scepticism.

SERM. 3. The doctrine of *transubstantiation*
 VII. is in itself full of absurdities and contra-
 dictions.

It supposes that accidents, or properties, exist; and yet exist in no subject, or inhere in no substance. That two substances, for instance, *bread* and *wine*, can be divested of all their properties, or accidents, and take all the properties of the body and blood of a man; and yet remain the same substances as before, i. e. without any evidence of their having any one of those properties. Or, in other words, that they are, at the same time, changed and not changed; bread and wine, and not bread and wine; the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Paul calls it *bread* after consecration. But, according to the *church of Rome*, it is not bread, but the real body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord commanded his disciples to *do this in remembrance of him*, i. e. when he was corporally taken from them. But it would have been absurd to have bid them eat and drink his real flesh and blood,

blood, in remembrance of his real flesh and blood. As it supposes him to be corporally absent, while he is asserted to be corporally present. Again; we are *thus to shew forth his death 'till he come*; i. e. until the time, when he shall again be corporally present with us. Now herewith his bodily presence is utterly inconsistent. For it supposes him to be already come; and then there can be occasion for a rite, instituted purely for the remembrance of him, during his absence.

Our Lord's body is but one single body; and therefore can be in no more than one single place, at one time. It was formerly on earth, and was nailed to a cross, without one of the gates of *Jerusalem*. But it is now in glory, at the right-hand of God, in the third heavens; and there it is to continue till the time of the restitution of all things. But out of this one body, the *church of Rome* can make ten thousand bodies; and yet suppose them all to be one and the same body. Though no body whatever can be in more places than one at a time:

yet

SERM. yet *these good catholics*, by their uncommon sagacity and acutenesse, have found out a new philosophy; and suppose that the same body may, at the same time, be in more places than one, i. e. in heaven and in ten thousand places upon earth; wherever any of their priests have a mind to consecrate the elements and to make God.

Rev.
xvii. 6.

It is very remarkable, that the adulterous woman, in the *Revelation*, was represented, in vision, unto St. *John*, as *drunk* with the blood of the Saints and of the martyrs of Jesus; and *so drunk*, that St. *John* greatly wondered at her. But surely none, but one that is thoroughly intoxicated, would affirm “ that
 “ number *one* is number *ten thousand*;
 “ that the same body may, at the very
 “ same instant of time, be in heaven and
 “ upon earth; glorified and not glorified;
 “ a spiritual body and not a spiritual
 “ body; eat and not eat; divided into
 “ many parts, and yet continue whole
 “ and undivided.” Who, but one that is *drunk*, or deprived of the use of his *reason*, would pretend to affirm, “ that
 “ our

“ our Lord took his whole body in his
 “ own hand, broke it in pieces, and
 “ gave it to his disciples to receive and
 “ eat; and that they actually eat up his
 “ whole body; and yet, after that, he
 “ sat at the table with them, with
 “ his intire body, whole and uneat;
 “ as their own eyes could clearly and
 “ plainly discern?”

In what I have already quoted from
the Trent catechism, it is said “ to be the
 “ true body of Christ, which was borne
 “ of the virgin, and is now in heaven;
 “ together with his soul and divinity;
 “ that it is intire, in every part of the
 “ bread, and in every drop of the wine.”

But was ever such jargon uttered, and
 made an article faith, essential to salva-
 tion? One would really think that *the*
priests had coined this article, as a trial
 of their skill, to see how far they could
 impose upon *the laity*, and render them
 their *dupes* and *vassals*. What! shall a
 man, even tho’ he was a *priest*, ordained
 in a lineal, uninterrupted succession from
 the apostles, be able to make God? The
 body of our Lord Jesus Christ was form-

SERM. ed, in a miraculous manner, above one

VII. thousand seven hundred years ago : and *the*

Deity existed from all eternity. Can he, therefore, be made to morrow, who exists already? Can the deity be *created*, who is self-existent and uncreated, necessary and dependent? Can he begin to be, who has existed from all eternity? Or can a small wafer, which is not two inches in diameter, be the body of a man, of about six feet in length, with the blood in the veins and arteries, and all the limbs and members in just and due proportion?

And finally, whereas they say " that the whole body of Christ is intire in every part of the bread and in every drop of the wine : " they must hold that not only the whole body and blood of Christ are contained under the whole bread, or wafer ; but that, if you break the bread, or wafer, into never so many parts, yet every part will be the *whole* body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now here again is a new sort of Philosophy, or rather the most notorious blunder. For, though it is an easy and obvi-

ous

ous thing to divide a piece of bread into SERM. 2
its several *parts*; yet it was never heard VII.
of (but in the church of *Rome*) that
any thing could be divided into its several
wholes; or that any and every the least
part should be as big as *the whole*.

4 and lastly. The doctrine of *transub-*
stantiation is a monstrous and shocking
doctrine.

When our Lord (in the sixth chapter
of St. *John's* gospel) had spoken of the
Israelites eating manna in the wilderneſſe;
and afterwards of his own feeding a mul-
titude with a few loaves and fiſhes, he
(as his uſual manner was) alluded to
theſe things; and, in figurative language,
talked of giving the *Jews* his fleſh to eat;
meaning thereby that his doctrine would
nouriſh their ſouls, as the fleſh of ani-
mals nouriſhed their bodies: — the *Jews*
were ſhocked, when they underſtood his
words in the literal ſenſe; and ſaid,
“ How can this man give us his fleſh to
“ eat?” But the *Papiſts* (being more
fooliſh and ridiculous than the *Jews*, who
were our Lord's mortal enemies) are not
ſhocked, but contend for that very ab-
ſurdity.

SERM. furdity. But what an horrible thing is
 VIII it, if duly considered? What would
 a person of any humanity eat the flesh
 and drink the blood of a man? We look
 upon them as *Canibals*, or the most wild
 and barbarous savages, who have eat the
 flesh and drank the blood of their ene-
 mies. But literally to eat the flesh and
 drink the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 who loved us so as to lay down his life
 for us;—to do this willingly, frequently,
 and without the least horror or remorse;
 —how dreadful, how shocking and hor-
 rible must this needs be? *Oh, tell it not in*
Gath; publish it not in the streets of Ashca-
lon; proclame it not among the enemies
of the christian religion, that some of
the christians first pretend to make their
God, and then literally to eat him up.

“When we call wine *Bacchus* (sais
 “*Tully*, the Roman orator) and our
 “fruit, *Ceres*; we use a common mode
 “of speaking; but can you imagine any
 “person so mad, as to reckon what they
 “eat, to be a God?” “The *Egyptians*
 “(sais *St. Origen*) think a brute creature
 “to be God; and therefore they abstain
 “from

“ from eating its flesh, more than from
 “ death.” But the *Papists* are not shock-
 ed at these things, which created an hor-
 ror in some of the most stupid and igno-
 rant heathens. For they, with great
 shows of piety and devotion, hold Christ
 to be God; and yet, at the same time,
 without pity or remorse, reverence or af-
 fection for him, do (as they pretend)
 devour his real flesh, and drink his real,
 vital blood. *The Jews*, his bitter and
 implacable enemies, who brought him to
 the cross, would have shuddered at the
 thought. How inhumane, therefore, how
 cruel and shocking a doctrine must this
 needs be? what wonder, that they have
 destroyed so many thousands of his most
 faithful followers, and perpetrated the
 most amazing cruelties, who devour the
 flesh and drink the very blood of *the*
Lord Jesus Christ, that great leader of
 the noble army of martyrs, and glorious
 captain of our salvation?

So much for the confutation of the
Popish doctrine of *transubstantiation*.

from living in flesh, more than from
"death" in the power of resurrection.
ed at these things, which are not an honor
for in form of the most noble and pure
your intention. For the? with these
shows of piety and devotion, hold Christ
to be God, and yet, at the same time,
without any of those tokens, tokens of all
fellowship (as they pretend)
to be in the flesh, and thus his real
and blood. For Jesus, my sister and
my brother, who brought him to
the world, would have manifested at the
thought of his incarnation, therefore how
much and how often a doctrine shall that
manifested what would be that they have
delivered to many thousands of his most
faithful followers, and preserved the
most sacred truths, which, before the
birth and death of the very blood of the
Lord Jesus Christ, the great leader of
the whole race of man, and glorious
spirit of our salvation, was not
of power for the conversion of the
world, the world of mankind.



S E R M O N VIII.



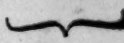
The terrible consequences of *trans-*
substantiation.

The second sermon on this text.

I COR. xi. part of the 24th verse.

*This is my body, which is broken
for you. ----*



AFTER we had pointed SERM.
out the connection of these VIII.
words with the context, 
the method proposed, was,
I. To lay before you some
of the plainest and strongest arguments,

SERM. which the *Protestants* have alleged, against
 VIII. the Popish doctrine of *transubstantiation*.
 And,

II. To mention several reasons why we should take some pains clearly, and effectually, to confute so idle and ground-lesse an opinion.

Under the first head, four arguments were produced, viz. 1. The protestant interpretation of the words, [*This is my body,*] i. e. “This bread is to represent “my body,” is wise and reasonable; and therefore no other interpretation need to be inquired after.

2. The doctrine of *transubstantiation* would invalidate the testimony of our senses, and that in cases where the senses are proper judges.

3. The doctrine of *transubstantiation* is in itself full of absurdities and contradictions.

4. The doctrine of *transubstantiation* is a monstrous and shocking doctrine.

We now procede to the *II^d*. general head, viz. To mention several reasons, why we should take some pains, clearly and effectually

fectually to confute so idle and ground-
 lesse an opinion. SERM.
 VIII.

I. If we should admit one unreason-
 able article of faith, or one absurdity in
 religion, it would draw on another and
 another, and so on; till religion, instead
 of a plane, simple doctrine, leading to
 the most sublime virtue and perfect hap-
 pineffe, would become abstruse and mys-
 terious, unintelligible and unreasonable.

This *the church of Rome* knows very
 well; and makes her advantage of it,
 with all that can be persuaded to believe
 in her, blindly and with an implicate
 faith. Their constant cry is, "You must
 believe, as the church believes. You
 have nothing to be afraid of, in sub-
 mitting to the authority of the church;
 but a great deal to fear, if you will
 not submit to her determinations."

And, if any person be so curious as to
 inquire into the nature and evidence of
 what he is to believe; and ask, "How
 can these things be?" They immedi-
 ately cry out, *Mystery!*

It hath often struck me with the great-
 est astonishment, to read in the writings
 of

SERM. of St. *John*, such an exact description of
 VIII. this corrupt church; "She had upon

Rev. xvii. "her forehead her name written (after

5. "the manner of the most impudent har-

"lots, in that age) And the first word

"of that name was MYSTERY." And

this adulterous woman, who was so fond

of *mysteries*, is represented, as *Babylon the*

great, the most notorious enemy and per-

secutor of the people of God, who should

carry them into a long, long captivity;

—*the mother of harlots, and of the (idola-*

tries, or) abominations of the earth. In-

stead of plane reason and scripture well

interpreted, in matters of doctrine; and

the substantial rules of piety and virtue,

in matters of practice; she intoxicates

her votaries with a fondness for *mysteries*;

dark, unintelligible and unreasonable doc-

trines: which, if you desire to have ex-

plained, she immediately tells you that

they are mysteries, i. e. things which you

are not to understand, but believe. Thus,

by degrees and in the successive ages of

the church, the pure, plane and simple

religion of Jesus hath been turned into

mystery and absurdity, darknesse and con-

fusion;

fusion; and the greatest and most amazing corruption introduced into the noblest and most excellent scheme of religion, that was ever made known unto the children of men. SERM. VIII.

Indeed, if a man can believe *transubstantiation*, he may believe any thing. But, if we would adhere to *the truth, as it is in Jesus*; if we would retain the simple, unmixed, gospel of Christ, we ought strenuously to oppose this doctrine; as opening a wide door to all the unintelligible and absurd opinions, which mistaken or wicked men have a mind to introduce.

2. We ought most strenuously to oppose the doctrine of *transubstantiation*; because it (not only prevents union in the church of Christ; but) tends to make infidels, among professed christians; and to hinder the conversion of those, who have not yet imbraced the gospel of Christ. According to right reason and the pure word of God, men ought to understand what they believe; and to see some sufficient reason, or evidence, for their believing. But, if *transubstantiation* was one

SERM. one of those articles of faith, which must
 VIII. be believed, then men must believe they
 know not what; and assent to it, they
 know not why. According to one of St.

* *De doct. Christiana*. L. 3. *Austin's* rules for interpreting scripture *,
 the literal eating the flesh and drinking the
 blood of Christ would be a great and hor-
 rible crime. *Averroes* was a learned hea-
 then, who flourished in the eleventh centu-
 ry, when this monstrous doctrine of *tran-*
substantiation first obtained: And it drew
 from him this remarkable observation,
 " I have inquired into all religions (*sais*
 " *be*) and have found none more foolish
 " than the Christians. Because that very
 " God, which they worship, they with
 " their teeth devour." From which he
 made this conclusion, " Because the
 " Christians eat that which they wor-
 " ship, let my soul be with the Philoso-
 " phers." — And, if *transubstantiation*
 was really a doctrine of Christianity, I
 cannot say but his conclusion would have
 been just and reasonable. But,

There is no such article in *the holy*
scriptures; and that is enough for us,
 who make the *scriptures* the rule and
 standard

standard of our faith and practice. But, SERM.
as they are apt to boast very much of VIII.
the authority of *the antient fathers*, it
may be proper to add, that the celebrated
Erasmus, who lived and died in the com-
munion of *the church of Rome*, was rec-
koned the greatest and most learned di-
vine of his age, and who was exceeding
well read in the antient fathers; — the
most celebrated and learned *Erasmus*, I
say, a Popish divine, frankly confessed,
“ that it was late, before the church de-
“ fined *transubstantiation*; and that it
“ was unknown to the antient fathers,
“ both name and thing.”

The Mahometans (as travellers inform
us) reproach the christians as devouring
of their own God; and affirm that, “ by
“ thus eating the flesh of Christ, and
“ drinking his blood, the *christians* use
“ him worse than the *Jews* did: because
“ it is more savage to eat his flesh and
“ drink his blood than it was to procure
“ his death.”

— Studious and thinking men in *Popish*
countries are said to be in general *Atheists*
or *Deists*, And what wonder! For, as
they

SERM. they know little or nothing of christianity,

VIII. ty, but what they learn from their own priests, or from *Popish* authors, they take it for granted *that Popery is Christianity.*

And, if that was really christianity, what wise man would imbrace or retain it? And it is no wonder that, in all countries, unbelievers should abound, among the more inquisitive part of mankind, in proportion to the number of absurd doctrines, which are established, or prevail; though they may be cautious how they profess their infidelity, where it may expose them to troubles or difficulties, if they should venture to declare it publicly.

As, therefore, we desire the conversion of *Jews, Mahometans* and *heathens*, all over the world, (And who that has the principles of a christian, or even of a man, but heartily wishes the greatest happiness to all mankind? — As, therefore, we desire the conversion of the whole earth) or would prevent the growth of infidelity; in our own nation; we ought most earnestly to contend against *transubstantiation*; and, in proportion, against all unintelligible

gible and absurd doctrines whatever ; but SERM.
always against *transubstantiation*, as the VIII.
first-borne and most monstrous of all ab-
surdities.

3. They who, in consequence of the
absurd doctrine of *transubstantiation*, wor-
ship *the host*, as the real flesh and blood,
soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus
Christ, are guilty of *idolatry*; and that
is a crime very much and very often con-
demned in holy scripture.

There were of old two sorts of idola-
try. The one was terminating their wor-
ship on *false Gods*; the other was wor-
shipping *the true God*, in methods, or by
mediums, which were not of divine ap-
pointment. The first was called *The*
having other, or strange, Gods; such as
Baal, Moloch, Ashtaroth, and the like.
The other was having *idol-mediators*, by
(or through) which to worship the true
God: such was *Aaron's golden calf*, the
two images at *Dan* and *Bethel*, set up by
King *Jeroboam*, for his subjects to repair
to, instead of their going up to the tem-
ple at *Jerusalem*. And thereby he is of-
ten said to have caused *Israel to sin*.

It

SERM.

VIII.

It is also taken notice of, as an aggravation of the crimes of some of the succeeding Kings of *Israel*, that they not only fell into the sin, wherewith *Jeroboam* had caused *Israel* to sin; but they also worshiped *Baal*, or other false Gods. And that was a much greater crime than worshipping the true God by an image, i. e. by a false medium, or idol-mediator.

Now, in worshipping *the host*; i. e. the bread, or wafer, made use of, in the Lord's supper, according to the doctrine of the *council of Trent*, it is to be adored with *Latria*, i. e. with the supreme worship, which is given to the true God. And, in consequence thereof, they worship it *as God*, kneeling before it, and adoring it with the lowest prostrations. They are, therefore, guilty of the highest act of idolatry; because they worship that as the true God, which is most evidently a mere wafer, or piece of bread, and which has no one proof of its being the true God.

They have alleged “that, if they
“ worship that as God, which is not so,
“ it is only a simple error, or mere mis-
“ take

“ take in judgment; but not so high SERM.
 “ and aggravated a crime, as *idolatry*.” VIII.
 To which,

I answer, That would have been an excuse for all the idolatry, that ever was practised in the world. For it was but pleading that they took *Jupiter*, *Moloch*, or *Baal*, for the true God; or the images at *Dan* and *Bethel* for proper mediums, by (or through) which to worship the true God: and therefore theirs was a simple error, or mere mistake in judgment, and not the high and aggravated crime of *idolatry*. But, as this plea would not have excused them, so neither will it excuse the members of *the church of Rome*; who worship, as the true God, what is most evidently nothing more than a wafer, or piece of bread; i. e. who *worship the creature instead of the creator, who is over all God blessed for evermore.*

4. As we value true christianity, and would preserve the evidence thereof in its full strength and beauty, we ought to oppose the doctrine of *transubstantiation*.

Some of the most striking proofs of Christ's mission and doctrine were *mira-*

SERM. *cles*, which were appeals to the senses of
 VIII. mankind, and necessarily implied that
 ~~~~~  
 men may rationally trust their senses, and depend upon their testimony. But, in order to believe *transubstantiation*, it is necessary a man should not believe his own senses. For, tho' he may discern, by his eyes, his taste, and his smell, that bread and wine remain, after consecration; just as they were before, and without any alteration at all; yet he must not trust his eyes and other senses, but must believe them to be the real flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it is very easy to discern which we ought to give up; viz. Whether we should reject the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, which has no foundation in *reason* or *scripture*; but many strong arguments against it: — or admit that one article of *transubstantiation*; and thereby overthrow, or invalidate, some of the strongest arguments for the truth of Christ's mission and doctrine. The miracles of our blessed Lord and of his holy apostles were evident appeals to mens senses; and especially that grand miracle of our Lord's resurrection

urrection from the dead. But, if Christ and his apostles had worked no other sort of miracles, than the *Popish priests* do, when they consecrate the elements, and pretend to turn them into the real flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; they would have made few, or no, converts by their miracles. Or if, after they had worked those glorious and evident miracles, which they performed, they had told mankind "they must not trust their own eyes," they would have pulled down with one hand what they had built up with the other; and would at once have destroyed the force of those arguments, which arose from their miracles, and which bear such a glorious attestation to the divine mission.

(5, *lastly.*) To oppose *transubstantiation*, with all our might, is necessary to the peace, liberty, and happiness of mankind.

This, therefore, must be a most glorious cause; and all wise men will esteem it worthy the highest regard. For, wherever that absurd doctrine is received, it most extravagantly enhances *the power of*

SERM. *the priest*; who pretends that he can, as  
 VIII. often as he pleases, *make God*. And what  
 { homage or reverence can be too great for  
 him, or what power and authority may  
 he not claim, who is thought capable of  
*making God*?

Hereby is introduced an hideous train  
 of direful demons, enough to interrupt  
 the peace and blast the happineſſe of man-  
 kind, viz. implicate faith and absurdity,  
 the moſt childiſh ſuperſtition and moſt  
 ſtupid idolatry, ignorance and blaſphemy,  
 cruelty and oppreſſion, exquisite tortures,  
 and even *death* itſelf, in all its moſt ghaf-  
 tly and formidable appearances.

When an hierarchy of covetous, info-  
 lent, domineering and debauched *prieſts*  
 bear ſway, (Kind heaven preſerve the  
 human ſpecies from their baleful influ-  
 ence!) like a ſpreading peſtilence they  
 make havoc and deſolation all around  
 them; and never fail to deſtroy the liber-  
 ties of mankind, and introduce the moſt  
 arbitrary and tyrannical government. From  
 that fatal moment, the people may bid  
 Farewel, a long Farewel, to thoſe dear  
 and deſireable bleſſings of civil and reli-  
 gious



gious liberty, and the secure possession of their lives and properties. In the more moderate *Popish* countries, there are dragons and gallies, confinement in loathsome prisons, confiscation of goods, and persecution even unto death. But, in the more orthodox and bigoted, there is the horrible, the most horrible and tremendous court of *Inquisition*, to silence all that dare to call in question the legitimacy of *this monster*, and the unlimited power of *the priest*, who is its father, and who makes unknown advantages of this spurious birth.

To be torne away from one's family and dearest friends, in the most clandestine and forcible manner; to be thrown into a dark and dismal dungeon, without friend or companion, without books, without light, and almost without the necessaries of life; to live in one perpetual night of darknesse and horror, amidst the deep sighs and hollow groans and murmurs of their fellow-sufferers in the neighboring dungeons, or the screams and yells of those who are stretched on the rack, or undergoing the severest tortures;

SERM. to be brought out before the most priestly  
 VIII. and vengeful of all mortals, *the Lords of*  
*the holy court of Inquisition*; men, who  
 have devested themselves of all bowels of  
 tenderneſſe and humanity, and who are  
 poſſeſſed of the blackeſt malice and moſt  
 inveterate rancor againſt all honeſt and  
 thoughtful men; — there to be teased  
 with the moſt ſubtile and inſnaring queſti-  
 ons; or ſtretched on a rack, and tortured  
 with the moſt ſtudied, deliberate and di-  
 abolical cruelty; in the preſence of the  
*father inquiſitor*, who ſits and enjoys their  
 tortures; — and, finally, to undergo that  
 moſt formidable torment, of being pub-  
 licly roaſted to death, in a lingering fire;  
 as a ſpectacle of diverſion to the people,  
 and a prelude (as they pretend) to their  
 burning for-ever in the flames of hell!  
 — Theſe, theſe, are the arguments, by  
 which *the church of Rome* proves the glo-  
 rious doctrine of *transubſtantiation*. [And,  
 indeed, no other ſort of arguments could  
 prove ſuch a doctrine, or force ſuch num-  
 bers of mankind to profeſſe their belief  
 of it.] Theſe are the hideous conſequen-  
 ces of eſtabliſhing this, as an article of  
 faith,

faith, essential to salvation ! This was the SERM. VIII.  
 grand *burning* article, in the days of the *Popish Queen Mary*, when the *Smithfield*  
*fires* were lighted up, in this great city ;  
 and vast numbers of innocent *Protestants*  
 experienced the spirit of *Romish mother*  
*Church*, whose very tender mercies were  
 the greatest cruelty.

A most daring and unprovoked rebel-  
 lion, against the mildest and most just  
 and equitable of all the Kings of the  
 earth, is now broke out, in our land ;  
 headed by the young pretender, a bigoted  
 Papist, borne and brought up at *Rome*,  
 the seat of the *Beast* ; the city, which  
 has so long tyrannized over the nations  
 and Kings of the earth. This elder son  
 of the Pretender, the present disturber of  
 our peace and tranquility, has not only  
 been brought up, from his infancy, in a  
 veneration for all the fopperies of the  
*Romish church* ; but is well acquainted  
 with the *Italian* spirit of revenge and  
 cruelty, and the proper methods of treat-  
 ing incorrigible heretics, with whom faith  
 is to be kept, no longer than till he has  
 an opportunity of breaking it. I there-

1745.  
 when the  
 rebels  
 were  
 about  
*Derby.*



SERM. fore thought, in such a situation of things,  
VIII. it might not be amiss to show you somewhat of the absurdity of the distinguishing doctrines of *Popery*; and put you in mind of the tremendous consequences of bringing that religion again, into our happy island. For these or the like calamities you must expect, if a *Popish pretender* should ever mount the throne of these lands, and *Popish* government take place in *Great Britain*.

It would make one's eyes to run down with rivers of tears, and their very hearts to bleed with tenderneſſe and compaſſion, to read what havoc this one article of *transubſtantiation* hath made, among mankind. How many myriads of innocent and harmleſſe men, women and children have been ſacrificed to this devouring idol! It is an huge and ugly miſhapen monſter in itſelf, and a greater absurdity cannot, by all the wit of man, be invented: but it is ten thouſand times a greater monſter in its effects and conſequences; having devoured the fleſh, and drank the vital blood, of innumerable multitudes of the human race, and yet it is as far from

from being satiated as ever. In *popish* SERM. countries, it still opens wide its most VIII. bloody, dreadful, devouring jaws; and, like death and the grave, is continually crying out, *Give, Give.*

Is it possible that such a doctrine should be any part of the religion of *Jesus*, the spirit of whose religion is all *love* and *charity*? No! of this horrid monster a *Priest* was the father, and *falsehood* its mother. It was borne in the infernal regions; ascended in the smoke of the bottomlesse pit; was nursed up, in the *vatican*, at *Rome*; and, when licked into its present shape, and arrived at its full growth, it was sent abroad (like the grand destroyer) to walk up and down the earth, seeking whom it may devour. And to that tremendous place, which first gave it birth, it must (I doubt not) finally return. And, Oh that it might speedily be thrown down into that great deep, and torment the inhabitants of this earth no more!

We have, for some years, been engaged in a war with *France* and *Spain*. And the present rebellion has been fomented, and is assisted, by those *Popish*, hostile nations.

SERM. nations. The good Bishop of Rome has  
 VIII. been liberal also with his purse, and more  
 liberal with his blessings, to send forth  
 this darling *son of the church*, who has  
 been nursed in his bosom, — in order to  
 extirpate heresy, and recover this once  
 obedient and profitable island. To the  
 foreign troops there have joined some  
*British* Papists and barbarous highland  
 Clans, with others of desperate fortunes,  
 who would gladly overturn the constitu-  
 tion, that they might make their own  
 fortunes out of the plunder of their na-  
 tive country. This is the confederacy!  
 And they are now making rapid marches  
 into the very bowels of our country, and  
 seem to be bending their way to this  
 grand metropolis. Let us (if occasion  
 be) all rise as one man; rise (I say) and  
 arm in our country's cause! Behold, our  
 native land is bleeding with intestine  
 broils; our glorious and envied liberty is  
 boldly struck at; our families and friends  
 are in imminent danger; and, above all,  
 our pure and holy religion. *Popery* (the  
 curse of human nature, the greatest plague  
 upon earth) is coming in, upon you,  
 like

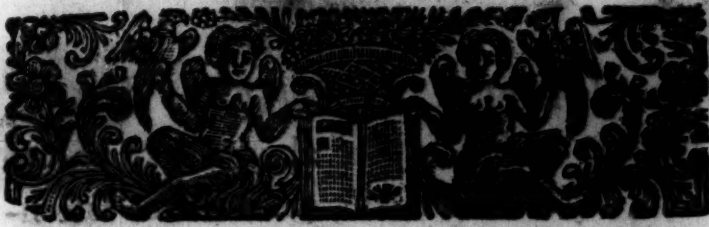


like a flood. Earnestly pray to *the God* SERM.  
*of battles*, that he would once more ap- VIII,  
 pear for our dear, native land. And then  
 put your trust in God, who is able to de-  
 liver and will (I hope and believe) once  
 more deliver.

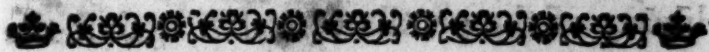
Let us take care to walk worthy of  
 our inestimable privileges. And, if the  
 days of our peace and tranquility are pro-  
 longed, render unto God according to  
 the benefits received at his hands. Let  
 us not, then, *sing his praises and soon*  
*forget his wonderful works!* But, for the  
 future, guard, not only against the in-  
 crease of *Popery*, on one hand; and *in-*  
*fidelity* and irreligion, on the other hand;  
 — but against every corruption of our  
 pure and holy religion; and, above all,  
 against vice and wickedness, which is  
 the most destructive to every nation, com-  
 munity, or person, that continues to in-  
 dulse to the practice thereof!

Use a good, friendly way to the  
of battle that would once more  
grant our dear native land  
but your heart in God, who is able to  
live and will (I hope and believe)  
more deliver.

Let us take care to walk worthy of  
our inalienable privileges. And if the  
days of our peace and tranquillity are pro-  
longed, remember unto God according to  
the promise received at his hands. Let  
us not, then, say, "We are safe and  
(forget his wonderful works) But for the  
future, guard, not only against the in-  
crease of error, on one hand, and in-  
deed, and in religion, on the other hand;  
—but against every corruption of our  
pure and holy religion; and above all,  
against vice and wickedness, which is  
the most destructive to every nation, com-  
munity, or person that continues to in-  
dulge in the practice thereof!



## S E R M O N IX.



### Christianity, a reveled Myſtery.

A Sermon, preached, upon accepting the  
Pastoral care of the church, in *Crouch-*  
*ed Friars, London. October 12, 1740.*

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EPHES. vi. 19.

*Praying always, --- for me, that  
utterance may be given unto  
me; that I may open my mouth  
boldly, to make known the myſ-  
tery of the goſpel.*



T. Paul was for two years a SERM.  
prisoner, in his own hired house, IX.  
at Rome; to which he refers, *Acts*  
in the verse that follows the text, when *xxviii.*  
he<sup>30.</sup>



SERM. he calls himself *An Ambassador in bonds,*

IX. For he had a soldier always chained to him, by a long chain, which was fastened about the apostle's right arm and the soldier's left. Thus was he in custody, night and day, for standing up for the liberty of the gentile converts, against the impositions of the Jews and Judaizing christians. And, during that confinement, he wrote this, and some other epistles, to the gentile christian churches, to guard them against impostures and delusions.

In that first age, many of the christians had the miraculous gifts of the spirit. And St. Paul exhorted them to make use of those gifts, *in singing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, or songs of the spirit; and in praying always, i. e. evening and morning every day, for all Saints, or christians; and for himself in particular; that (notwithstanding his present discouragements) he might open his mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel; or spread it with that freedom, sincerity, and courage, which became the apostle of the gentiles.*

As

As to that phrase, [*the mystery of the* SERM. *gospel,*] which St. Paul was to make IX. known, it requires some explanation. By *a mystery*, in general, as the word is used in the New Testament, is meant *some remarkable truth, or fact, which was secret or unknown before; but which was very intelligible, when once it was made known.* The Greeks used the word, concerning such *religious mysteries*, as were kept secret from the common people, but discovered unto such as were initiated. For they, and they alone, were let into the secret. — And the writers of the New Testament have used the word in the same signification. For, when the apostles asked our Lord, *why he spoke to the people in parables?* He answered, *Because* Mat. xiii. *to you it is given to know the mysteries of* II. *the kingdom of God; but to them it is not given.* i. e. The apostles were then initiated, and so let into the mysteries of the gospel. But those sacred things were, as yet, hid from the people; who are elsewhere called *persons without*, or such as Mark iv. were not initiated. For the Greeks used II. to exclude uninitiated persons from their sacred

SERM. sacred mysteries. — But, though the apo-

IX. stles were first initiated into the christian

church, by Christ himself; or let into  
*the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven;*

yet Christ himself initiated several others.

And, after his ascension, the apostles, by baptism, initiated all who were willing to imbrace the gospel of Christ.

The word, [*Mystery*,] is used very often in the New Testament; sometimes for the grand facts of the gospel in general, such as the appearance of Christ in the flesh, his resurrection and ascension;

1 Tim. which are called *The mystery of godliness*; and which, without controversy, is very great and astonishing. Elsewhere, the  
iii. 16.

1 Cor. ii. gospel is called *The wisdom of God in a mystery*. And God's casting off the body of the Jewish nation, because of their rejection of the Messiah and his gospel, is

Rom. xi. called *a Mystery*. That grand corruption of christianity, which made way for the man of sin and son of perdition, is called  
25.

2 Theff. *the mystery of iniquity*: which began to work, even in the apostles days. Another *mystery*, reveled to St. Paul, and by him communicated to the christians, was  
ii. 7. that



that remarkable fact; viz. that the Saints, SERM.  
 who shall be found alive upon this earth, IX.  
 at Christ's second coming, shall not die 1 Cor.  
 and rise again, like the rest of mankind; xv. 51,  
 but shall be suddenly changed into im- 52.  
 mortal, without dying. Unto St. John, Rev. i.  
 God reveled *the mystery of the seven stars*; 20.  
 or what was to be understood by that vi-  
 sion: — the *mystery of God*; and the *mys-* & x. 7.  
*tery of Babylon, the adulterous woman, the* & xvii.  
*beast, and the false prophet.* 5, &c.

But the word [*mystery*] is most com-  
 monly applied to that remarkable fact,  
 of God's calling the heathens into the  
 christian church, without requiring of  
 them any subjection to the law of Moses.  
 It was prophesied, in the Old Testament,  
 that Christ should be *a light to enlighten*  
*the gentiles*, as well as the glory of God's  
 people, Israel: that *in him should the gen-*  
*tiles trust, and all nations flock to his stan-*  
*dard.* So that the calling in of the gen-  
 tiles was in itself *no mystery*, in the days  
 of our Savior and his Apostles. But it  
 was not reveled, in the Old Testament,  
 on what terms the *gentiles* were to be ta-  
 ken into the christian church. And the

Q

Jews,

SERM. *Jews*, who had such strong prejudices in

IX. favor of their own nation, used to rec-

kon that the *heathens* were to become subject to their law, or proselytes to the Jewish religion, before they could be admitted into the *Messiah's* kingdom.

Whereas there was no ground for that supposition. And *our Lord* reveled it to

*St. Paul*, that the gentiles were to be taken into the christian church, without any submission to the law of Moses. This is

Rom.

xvi. 25,  
26.

what he speaks of, once and again; and represents "as a mystery hid from former

"ages; but now reveled unto him, a-

"greeably to the writings of the antient

"prophets (who had declared that *Christ*

"*should be a light to enlighten the Gentiles*)

"and, by him, made known to all na-

"tions, for the obedience of faith," or

to bring all nations to obey the gospel of

Eph. iii.

3, &c.

*Christ*. And he gloried in it, "that God

"had reveled *that mystery* to him, who

"had once persecuted the disciples of

"*Jesus*; and thereby rendered himself

"lesse than the least of all the Saints, or

"*christians*. And yet, so great was the

"divine favor to him, that he was sent

"out

“ out to preach, among the *gentiles*, the  
“ unsearchable riches of Christ; and so  
“ initiate them, or make them partakers  
“ of *the mystery*, which was hid from  
“ former ages, in the (*breast, or*) counsel  
“ of that God, who had now raised the  
“ new creation by Jesus Christ; and  
“ admitted, not only Jews, but men of  
“ all nations, into it.” This is *the mys-*  
*tery*, of which he speaks in our text;  
and which it required great courage to  
publish, as it was a truth so exceding of-  
fensive to the Jews and Judaizing chris-  
tians; and had occasioned the Apostle’s  
present confinement. “ He, therefore,  
“ earnestly desires their daily prayers, not  
“ only for the christians in general; but  
“ for himself in particular; that the be-  
“ ing in prison might not shut up his  
“ mouth, and make him afraid to speak  
“ out; but *that a door of utterance might*  
“ *be given unto him*, a proper resolution  
“ and fortitude of mind; *that he might*  
“ *open his mouth boldly, to make known*  
“ *the mystery of the gospel*, and assert the  
“ liberty of the gentile converts from all  
“ subjection to the law of Moses.”



SERM. And, in the paralel *epistle to the Colossians*

IX. [an epistle writ about the same time, and upon the same occasion, and sent by the very same messengers,] the apostle makes use of phrases, very like these in our Col. iv. text, — “Continue in prayer, and watch 2, 3, 4. “ in the same, with thanksgiving. With- “ all praying also for us; that God would “ open unto us a door of utterance, to “ speak the mystery of Christ; for which “ I am also in bonds: that I may make “ it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Having explaned that which is the most difficult phrase in the text, we may observe,

I. *That Christianity is a reveled mystery.* It was once hid in the wisdom, or council, of God; but by him it was, in the fulnesse of time, made known to his son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and he reveled it to the apostles, that they might make it known to all mankind. The apostles had the favor, of being first acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel. But St. Paul intimates “ that the Rom. xvi. 25, “ mystery, which was formerly hid, is 26. “ now reveled, or made known, unto all “ nations.” For that reason, the apostles desired

*a reveled Mystery.*

229

desired that men should look upon them SERM.  
*as stewards of the mysteries of God; i. e.* IX.  
not such stewards, as would darken, or I Cor.  
conceal, the mysteries of God; but such iv. 1.  
stewards as would faithfully make them  
known unto all, that were willing to  
learn them. — It is said that “ he, who  
“ speaketh in the church, in a language  
“ unknown to the audience, doeth not  
“ speak unto men, but unto God. For xiv. 2.  
“ no man present understandeth him.  
“ Neverthelesse (saith the apostle) *he, by*  
“ *the spirit, speaketh mysteries;*” i. e.  
not things unknown, or unintelligible, to  
himself; but to the audience. For it is  
said, That “ he, who speaketh in an un- Ver. 4.  
“ known tongue, *edifieth himself:*” which  
he could not possibly have done, if he  
had not understood what he then uttered.  
For, where there is no knowlege, there  
can be no edification. *St. Paul* saith to xv. 51.  
the Corinthians, *Behold I shew you a mys-*  
*tery:* i. e. I make known unto you a  
truth, or *fact*, of which you were for-  
merly ignorant; *viz.* that the christians  
of the last generation shall not die, but  
be suddenly changed into immortal. And

SERM. so, in many other places, as well as in our  
 IX. text, the apostle speaks of *reveling mysteries*;  
 after which, those facts no longer continued  
 secret; but were thenceforth well known,  
 well understood, and firmly believed.

There are, without question, many truths, which the human understanding cannot find out, or comprehend; and which will always remain *unreveled mysteries*; at least, as long as we abide in this world. But christianity is *a reveled mystery*, made known to us, for our increase in useful knowlege, and that we may abound in virtue and piety here, and at last be advanced to eternal glory and happineffe.

II. As christianity is a reveled mystery, *the ministers of Jesus Christ* are appointed to make it known to mankind.

To the apostles, such *mysteries*, as are contained in the New Testament, were reveled, immediately by Christ, or by the spirit. And they honestly made them known to mankind, both by their preaching and writings. They were stewards of the *mysteries* of God; and it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. They, therefore, did not conceal the truths,



truths, committed to them; but faithfully delivered them, just as they had received them from the Lord Jesus Christ. SERM. IX.

— As to the ministers of the gospel in later ages, there are no new revelations made to them; neither do they receive *the mysteries of the gospel*, from the immediate preaching of Christ, or by the inspiration of the spirit. But all, that they can know, of the mysteries of the gospel, they must gather from the writings of the apostles and evangelists; which sacred writings it is their business to study with great care and diligence, and faithfully to explain them to the people; to make conscience of giving them the right sense of every text, as far as they themselves are able to attain it; to instruct the ignorant, to reform the wicked, and to establish the righteous in their most holy faith; encouraging and comforting them, as long as they persevere in the practice of universal righteousness.

We have no *mysteries* that are peculiar to us; none, but what the people themselves may find in the scriptures, if they have equal leisure and capacity; and study

SERM. dy them with equal care and diligence.—

IX. The idolatrous, heathen priests used most carefully to conceal *their mysteries* from the common people, whom they called *the unworthy and the profane*. But unto such as were initiated, they were wont to give a symbol, whereby they might make other initiated persons know that they were *partakers of the sacred mysteries*. The symbol, used in the sacred mysteries of one of the heathen Gods, was a candle, a sword, or a musical instrument; of another, an handful of salt, ivy, or poppy. But the symbols of others were certain forms of obscure, or *mysterious*, words; which were generally agreeable to the worship, or character, of the God, whose signs they were. And those symbols, *the Priests* used to deliver to the persons who were initiated into *their mysteries*. And, by them, they knew each other, and were freely admitted to the most concealed parts of their sacred rites and ceremonies. And, indeed, it was exceeding proper, that the rites and ceremonies of the *heathen* worship should, many of them, be *concealed mysteries*. For they

they were so abominably filthy and ob-  
scene, that, if they had been exposed to  
public view, they would have raised the  
indignation of all the sober and virtuous  
part of mankind. To this, some think,  
the apostle refers, when he saith, " And  
" have no fellowship with the unfruitful  
" works of darknesse, but rather reprove  
" them. *For it is a shame to speak of*<sup>Eph. v;</sup>  
" *those things, which are done of them,*<sup>11, 12,</sup>  
" *in secret.*" And the adulterous wo-  
man, in the revelation, by whom is ge-  
nerally understood *the Church of Rome*,  
had upon her forehead her name, written  
in legible characters, the first word of  
which was MYSTERY. Possibly she  
might have that name given her, as it  
was foreseen that she would be exceding  
fond of mysterious and even unintelli-  
gible doctrines, such as *transubstantiation*  
and the like; whereby she inflaves the  
very minds of men, and makes them im-  
plicitely bow down to her authority. She,  
likewise, by thus obscuring the truth and  
making men fond of what is dark and  
unintelligible, leads them into vice, or  
supports them in it. And accordingly  
she



SERM. she is represented as *having a cup in her*

IX. *hand, full of abominations* (as having contrived several methods to make men religious, without any virtue) and as making *all the Kings of the earth, and all nations, drunk* with the intoxicating liquor of idolatry, superstition, bigotry and vice. She might, therefore, with the greatest propriety, be stiled MYSTERY, *Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.*

The antient heathens had great occasion to conceal *their mysteries*. But there is nothing in pure, uncorrupted christianity, that is unfit to be made known to all the world. *To the poor the gospel was preached*, by Jesus Christ and his apostles. And its doctrines are so reasonable and excellent, its precepts so pure and perfect; that the more they are examined and understood, the more will they approve themselves to all wise and virtuous persons. And it is the great use of a gospel ministry, that (while the people are, many of them, imployed about worldly affairs) they may study the scriptures, and *make known the mysteries of the gospel.*

Secret

*a reveled Mystery.*

235

*Secret things belong to the Lord our God; and we, poor, frail mortals have nothing to do with them.* *But the things, which* SERM. IX.

*God hath reveled, belong to us, the children* Deut. xxix. 29.

*of men; that we may understand and do all the words of the divine law. — Christianity hath too often been treated as an obscure and barren speculation, which might afford matter of contemplation or dispute. But it is in reality a doctrine according to godlinesse, a plane revelation of the mind and will of God, discovered to the human race, to refine their tempers and regulate their lives. Christianity is in itself, I say, a plane, practical religion. For the grace of God hath therein appeared unto all men; teaching them that, denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, they should lead sober, righteous and godly lives; and, in this way, look for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of the great God, and of our Savior, Jesus Christ; who gave himself unto death for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things the apostles and evangelists were to teach,*  
*and*

SERM. and to rebuke with authority those that  
 IX. taught a different doctrine. — The grace of  
 God, in the gospel, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; and is not confined to a few, chosen favorites, like the *mysteries* of the heathens. And it appeared to promote piety and virtue: whereas the *mysteries* of the heathens concealed and promoted vice.

Thus the apostles left *christianity*. And they, good men, having finished their course, went off the stage with honor. But they had not been long in their graves, before the ministers of the christian church began to imitate the heathen priests, and make a number of *mysteries*. For instance, their *creed*, which contained the principal articles of their faith, they represented as a *mystery*; and concealed it from the *Jews* and *heathens*; and, for some time, from their own catechumens. They also made the *Lord's Supper* another *mystery*; suffering none to be present, when it was celebrated, except the communicants themselves; and carefully keeping it a deep secret from all other persons. And, when the heathens  
 objected



objected against the secrecy of *the christian mysteries*, they did not deny, but defend it, by comparing them to the concealed mysteries of the heathen Gods. — Whereas the articles of the christian faith and the celebration of the Lord's supper have, neither of them, any thing in them, that we need to be ashamed of. — Some Ecclesiastics, indeed, and more especially those of *the church of Rome*, pretend that they are ordained in a lineal, uninterrupted succession from the apostles. That, being thus initiated, they are let into the *mysteries* of religion, and the profane laity are to be kept in ignorance, which they blasphemously stile *the mother of devotion*. And, when any have been for examining such doctrines as *transubstantiation* and the like; and have condemned them as unreasonable and absurd, they account it a sufficient defence of them to say, *They are mysteries*. By which they mean, “ they cannot be explained, neither ought “ they to be examined.” And, when inquiring men have not been satisfied with that answer, they have termed them *obstinate heretics, enemies to the faith, and*

*perverters*

SERM. *perverters of the mysteries of the gospel;*

IX. *who set up their own shallow, carnal rea-*

*son, in opposition to the faith of the catho-*  
*lic church, in all ages and nations.* For,  
 as their church is infallible, they must be  
 greatly to blame; who call in question her  
 doctrines, or determinations. But *protestants*  
 disclaim the power, and disbelieve the in-  
 fallibility of the church of Rome; and  
 their ministers are to search the scriptures  
 and *make known the mysteries of the gospel.*

III. “ They, who have attempted to  
 “ make known the mysteries of the gospel,  
 “ have generally met with great oppositi-  
 “ on; and therefore it requires resolution  
 “ and fortitude to make them known.”

When St. *Paul* wrote this epistle;  
 where our text is, he was imprisoned at  
 Rome, for *making known the mystery of the*  
*gospel.* And he intimates “ that he had  
 “ great occasion for a door of utterance,  
 “ that he might open his mouth *boldly*, to  
 “ *make known the mystery of the gospel*; for  
 “ which he was then an ambassador in  
 “ bonds; that therein he might speak *bold-*  
 “ *ly*, and as he ought to speak.” Because of  
 his honesty and freedom of speech, he had  
 many

many enemies. And so must the faithful SERM.  
ministers of Christ generally expect, in all IX.  
ages, and in almost all places. So many  
and so great are the prejudices of some;  
and so amazing the weaknesse, the ma-  
lice, and the wickednesse of others; that  
one may foretell, without a spirit of pro-  
phesy, that faithful ministers will meet  
with difficulties and discouragements, of  
various kinds and from different quarters.  
And it is no wonder. For a faithful  
teacher of truth and righteousness is one  
of the most unpopular characters in the  
world: as he must not only condemn the  
infidel and prophane; but must speak  
truth among such as are ignorant, or have  
imbibed error; and must reprove such  
as are guilty of vice and wickednesse. In  
return for such fidelity, the infidel will  
insult him, and the bigot will persecute  
him. The prejudiced and the vicious  
will both exclaim against him, load him  
with hard names, and impute unto him  
very bad designs. And, if their power  
be equal to their wishes, when they can-  
not silence him by argument, they will  
do it by force. Such as can allow them-  
selves



SERM. selves to be angry, and to quarrel with  
IX. others, for merely differing in opinion  
from them, know not what manner of  
spirit they are of. For persecution pro-  
ceeds gradually : and, from reviling, goes  
on to imprisonment, confiscation of goods,  
banishment; or racks and tortures; the  
pillory, or mangling the body; cutting  
off the ears, branding the face with red  
hot irons, slitting the nostrils. And if  
nothing else will do, then fire and faggot,  
or some other cruel and infamous death.  
— *The church of Rome*, the most accom-  
plished of persecutors that have yet ap-  
peared, did not arrive all at once at the  
exquisite skill and dexterity, which she  
now manifests, in persecuting of heretics.  
They were first cursed and anathematized  
by their Popes and councils, and turned  
out of their synagogues, or churches, by  
dreadful, thundering excommunications.  
After that, Croisadoes, or holy wars, were  
levied against them. When these things  
would not do, they contrived that tre-  
mendous and infernal court of inquisition,  
which still subsists in many Popish coun-  
tries, to the great hindrance of the spread  
of

of true christianity, and the terror of all that would faithfully *make known the mystery of the gospel*. — But that is not the christian spirit! That is the spirit of *Papery*! The true christian spirit is a spirit of love and charity, which sweetens the temper of all such as cultivate it.

It is true, and ought greatly to be lamented, that there are many called christians, who have no more than the name; and who would make up their own want of piety and integrity, by their ill treatment of such as would honestly make known the mystery of the gospel. However faithful ministers must and will go on, indeavoring to take patiently all the unkind treatment which befalls them; thro' good report and bad report preaching the pure, unmixed gospel of christ; persisting stedfastly in their work, and leaving events to God; even tho' the more they are concerned to promote truth and holiness, they should become the more common subjects of uncharitable censure and severe reproach.

IV. *Lastly*. “ As so many difficulties  
“ and discouragements attend this work,

R,

“ the

SERM. "the people ought frequently and earn-

IX. "estly to pray for such as would make

known the mystery of the gospel."

*Pray for me (says the apostle) that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel; for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, and as I ought to speak.*

If it should be inquired, "To what  
"end should the people pray for their  
"ministers? Has not God appointed the  
"course of nature; and will not alter  
"it, upon their prayers? If it be right  
"to prosper ministers in their work, he  
"will do it, without the prayers of the  
"people; because he will do every thing  
"that is right. But, if he sees fit not  
"to prosper their labors, what influence  
"can the peoples prayers have, in such  
"a case? For he is of one mind, and  
"who can turn him?" In answer to  
such an objection, I would say, That  
*prayer* in general is designed to promote  
mens virtue and piety. And that, as far  
as it moves us to amend what is wrong  
in our tempers, or lives; or confirms us  
in



in what is wise and good; so far it is acceptable to God. And, in consequence of such prayers, he will grant us all proper blessings.—And that, as the end of prayer, in general, is to promote universal righteousness; so that particular part of prayer, commonly called *Intercession for others*, is to plant, or cherish, in us, a mutual love and concern for each others welfare. That, upon this account, it is highly proper for ministers to pray for their people; and for the people, in like manner, to pray for their ministers, as well as for each other. In as much as they will thereby excite a mutual love and good-will; and so derive a blessing from God, as well as prove mutual comforts and blessings to each other.—In this view, it is a rational and wise request; calculated to promote and effect the noblest ends. Especially, as faithful ministers are exposed to many difficulties and discouragements. And, upon that account, stand more in need of the prayers and affectionate regards of their own people, at least. But all lovers of truth and liberty, knowlege

SERM. and virtue, ought to *pray for them*; that  
 IX. *a door of utterance may be given unto them,*  
 ~~~~~ *that they may open their mouths boldly, to*  
make known the mystery of the gospel: and
 that they may publish truth, with that
 sincerity and freedom, with which the
 ministers of Christ ought to speak.

It had been a much easier thing for
 St. Paul, to have fallen in with the popu-
 lar sentiments; to have studied the hu-
 mors of the people, and sought to have
 gratified them, by soothing their preju-
 dices and flattering them in their vices.
 But, *then*, he would have preached him-
 self, and not Christ Jesus the Lord; *then*
 he would have corrupted the gospel, and
 been an unfaithful steward of the myste-
 ries of God. *Then* he would have been
 an enemy to the cross of Christ, and
 the servant and tool of men, instead of
 the upright servant of the living God.—
 And if, by your prayers and affectionate
 regards, we be enabled more easily to pre-
 serve our integrity, in faithfully making
 known to you the mystery of the gospel;
 and to use that freedom and boldness of
 speech, which becomes the ministers of
 Jesus

Jesus Christ. — If we observe the work of the Lord to prosper in our hands, and a love to truth and righteousness to prevail: — If we are encouraged to speak plain truth, without reserve; to lay before you the most clear and rational account of the christian doctrine; and to inculcate, with the greatest force and warmest application, the glorious precepts thereof; — tho' you may not, perhaps, be more pleased, yet you are in the true way to be more profited. For you are to measure your profiting, not by the rising or falling of your affections and animal passions; but in proportion to your understanding the scriptures better and to your growing in the love of God and man. Though, where the understanding has been first enlightened and convinced, it is very proper to have the affections raised, and to be zealously concerned for what is wise and good. However, the understanding ought first to be enlightened, by an acquaintance with the nature and evidences of *christianity*, which is *a reveled mystery*. For that faith, which is built upon knowlege and evidence, is

SERM. built upon a rock. And, though the
IX. storms of persecution should arise; or
temptations to Popery, to infidelity, or
to vice, should attack it; there is no probability of its falling, because it is founded upon a rock. But that faith, which is founded upon ignorance and credulity, is built upon the sand. And, when it is attacked, there is eminent danger of its falling, and that great will be the fall thereof.

It is, indeed, matter of lamentation, that any, who cry out against ignorance and credulity, superstition or enthusiasm, should run into the other most dangerous extreme, and throw off all regard to religion, forsaking the worshipping assemblies of christians, and restraining prayer before God. — But this is the way of the silly part of mankind, to run from one extreme to another. And but few will attend to that golden mean, in which truth, virtue, and religion do really lie. — I hope, you consider that you are rational creatures, christians, and protestants: that, as such, you are for having the mysteries of the gospel made known.
That

That you abhor taking away the scriptures from the common people, setting up other standards, or making *ignorance the mother of devotion*. That you will not content yourselves with the mere knowledge of religion, but will make conscience also of living and practising accordingly. That, as you value your own liberty, you will freely allow other people to enjoy their liberty. That you will not only maintain peace and harmony among yourselves; but love mankind in general, as christians ought to do. — If we, who minister in holy things, can perceive such fruits of our labor, it will animate us to constant zeal and diligence *in making known the mystery of the gospel*.

But, though *Israel* be not gathered in such numbers, as we could wish; nor knowledge and righteousness spread, with that swiftness and success, which we could earnestly desire; yet faithful ministers will be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. For, when the chief Pastor shall appear, at the great day, they shall be approved by him. And he will not require, at their hands, the blood of such

SERM. souls, as refuse to hearken to truth, or
IX. to practise righteousness; but will be-
stow upon them a crown of glory and
complete felicity, which will never wither,
or fade away.

And my most humble and earnest
prayer is, that I may so behave among
you, here, as to be found among the
approved, in that day!





S E R M O N X.



Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

LUKE V. 31, 32.

And Jesus answering, said unto them; "They, that are whole, need not a Physician: but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."



REPENTANCE consists SERM.
of such a sorrow for sin, X.
as produces amendment.—
Our text leads us to inquire, to whom *repentance* ought more especially to be preached?
It

SERM. It is evident, all are not equally guilty.

X. All, therefore, ought not to be treated alike; but according to the number and nature of their crimes, and the degree and duration of their evil habits.

Our Lord has taught us thus to distinguish. For he speaks of *sinners*, who are *to be called to repentance*; and of *righteous* persons, whom he did not come to *call to repentance*; and whom he represents elsewhere, as just (or righteous) persons, *who need no repentance*.

Some will be ready to inquire, "Is there a just man upon earth, who doeth good, and fineth not? Hath not St. Paul declared that he had already proved both Jews and Gentiles to be all under sin: as it is written, *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no not one.* And there are other passages of scripture, of like import. Now, if this be a description of the state of all mankind: then, how can it be said that there are, among

“ among men, any such just (or *righte-* SERM.
 “ *ous*) persons, *as have no need to be called* X.
 “ *to repentance?* Our Lord would not,
 “ surely, mention a character, which
 “ does not suite any part of mankind.
 “ By the *righteous*, therefore, whom he
 “ did not come *to call to repentance*, he
 “ must mean the *self-righteous*, or per-
 “ sons who phansied themselves so just
 “ and holy, as to have no occasion to be
 “ called to repentance. These are they
 “ that justify themselves; though they
 “ are not in reality holy, nor righteous,
 “ in the sight of God.”

But that *our Lord* did not, by the
righteous, mean the *self-righteous*, may
 appear from the two following obser-
 vations,

I. When St. *Paul* describes the wick-Rom. i.
 ednesse of the heathen world, and after-18, &c.
 wards of the Jewish nation, he oughtIII. Chap. II,
 not to be understood, as representing the
 case of every individual man. — For,
 among the *beathens*, there was *Socrates*,
Aristides, and others, who were never
 guilty of the black crimes there enume-
 rated. There was also a number of de-
 vout

SERM. vout Gentiles, who worshiped the true

X. God, in the synagogues of the Jews, both in *Judea* and in their various dispersions. Among the patriarchs, *Enoch*, *Noah*, and *Abraham*; and among the *Jews*, *David*, *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth* are described as *righteous* persons. — St. *Paul's* intention, therefore, plainly was, to represent the great and general prevalence of vice, both among Jews and heathens; and how much occasion there was for *the gospel*, in order to effect a general reformation. — According to the strict and literal interpretation, what he has said would not be true. For mankind were not then, all, hypocrites, oppressors, murderers, adulterers, and the like.

Psalms
xiv. 1,
&c.

If we consult the Psalm, from whence the apostle took these words, it will appear, that the royal Psalmist did not intend to describe all mankind, as so notoriously vicious. For he begins thus, "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.*" And all that follows there, concerning wicked men, must be understood

stood of such Atheists, or fools, who SERM.
have said in their hearts, *There is no God.* X.

For of such, it is evident that he affirms, *They are corrupt, they have done abominable works. There is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven, upon these sons of men; to see if there were any [of them] that did understand and seek God. [But he saw] They were all gone aside, they were all together become filthy: there was none [of them] that did good, no not one.* — These expressions, I say, must necessarily be understood of such fools, as said in their hearts, *There is no God.* For the Psalmist afterwards Psalm speaks of the people of God; and of the ^{xiv.} 4. 5. generation of the righteous. And whoever reads, with any attention, will find, that, all throughout the book of *Psalms*, there are two sorts of men spoken of, viz. the *righteous* and the *wicked*. And therefore, when the Psalmist says, *There is none that doeth good, no not one*, he could not mean, that all mankind were wicked; but all the irreligious and profane, who had no fear of God before their eyes. For to them he opposes the generation

SERM. *ration of the righteous.* And St. Paul is

X. as clear, in his epistles, in distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. And therefore could not, in any place, design to intimate that all mankind are wicked, in that high degree, or guilty of those notorious and black crimes, which he there enumerates.

2. By *righteous* persons, whom our Lord *did not come to call to repentance*, cannot be meant the *self-righteous*; or those, who are proud, and conceited, and puffed up with a notion of their own righteousness, while they are really wicked and unrighteous. For, as such persons have the greatest need to be called to repentance, so our Lord did actually, once and again, call them to repentance.

In the former part of our text, the righteous, who had no need of repentance, are described as persons *that are whole, and need not a physician*; not as persons who thought themselves whole, or imagined that they wanted not a Physician. — The *Scribes and Pharisees* were the persons, who murmured at our Lord's eating, drinking, and freely conversing, with

with publicanes and siners. That murmuring of theirs occasioned his speaking the words of the text; by which he intimated, that he conversed with such wicked persons, for their reformation. And that he did not call those scribes and pharisees, *righteous persons*, by way of sneer, may be concluded from these two things, viz. that it was not our Lord's custom to make use of ridicule; and that he did, often and earnestly, call those wicked *Scribes* and *Pharisees* to repentance.

The Scribes and Pharisees have been called *moral men*; whereas they were exceedingly *immoral*; and, at the same time, the most notorious of *self-righteous* persons, being very ostentatious and hypocritical. For, while they devoured widows houses, and committed other grievous immoralities, they made long prayers, and boasting pretensions to uncommon sanctity. They were curious about tithing small herbs and seeds, mint, anise, and cummin; but neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, fidelity, and the love of God.

They

SERM. They were like those sepulchres, which

X. the Jews whitened every year, and made very showy; so that, outwardly, they appeared fair and beautiful; but, within, were full of corruption and deformity. There was, therefore, the greatest occasion to call such men to repentance. And whoever attends to the sermons and discourses of our Lord, will find, that he was very frequently and earnestly calling them to repentance; and that he regarded and pursued that, as one grand design of his coming.

Having rejected that misinterpretation, it follows that, by the *righteous*, in our text, whom our Lord *did not come to call to repentance*, must be understood the same with those, of whom he speaks elsewhere; and describes, as *just* [or righteous] *persons, who need no repentance*. And, by *sinners*, must be understood persons of a quite different, and even directly opposite, character. But this will appear more clearly in the further considering this subject, which I propose to treat of, in the following method, viz:

Luke xv.
7.

I. Examine

I. Examine the sense of the greek words, translated [*righteous* persons, and *sinners*,] in every place, where they occur, in all the four gospels.

II. Make such observations from the words, as may be for our instruction, direction, and comfort.

I. It is proposed to examine the sense of the greek words, translated [*righteous* persons, and *sinners*,] in every place, where they occur, in all the four gospels.

By a *finer*, in scripture, is meant a *vi-ἀμαρτωλός* cious man: one, who is notoriously, or habitually and prevailingly, wicked. The sacred writers do not choose that word to denote a man, that is prevailingly pious and virtuous; though he is guilty of some mistakes in judgment, and some failings in practice. A good man, though chargable with those which are called *sinns of infirmity and daily incurfion*, is not, in the common language of scripture, branded with the name of *finer*; but the wicked man, in scripture, is often termed a *finer*.

S

I do

SERM. I do not desire that you should take
 X. this upon my bare word; but would

have you, with care and attention, to
 consult the following passages. In one
 of the places paralel to our text, it is taken
 notice of, that some publicanes and

Mat. ix.
 10, &c.

siners [i. e. notoriously wicked persons,] sat down at the table with *Jesus*. And the *Pharisees*, observing it, asked his disciples, Why their Master eat with publicanes and *siners*? They thought it scandalous to keep company with such wicked persons. But, when *Jesus* heard their

See also

Mark ii. "whole, need not a physician; but
 15, &c. "they that are sick." And then he declares, as in our text, "I am not come
 "to call the *righteous*, but *siners*, to re-
 "pentance."

John Baptist came in an austere way, with a coarse garb and spare diet, like a preacher of repentance, and one mortified to the world; a proper forerunner to a spiritual and suffering Messiah: and the

Matt. xi. Jews objected against his austerity. The
 29. see son of man came in a more familiar way.
 also Luke
 vii. 34. Upon which, they charged him with be-
 ing

ing a glutton and wine-bibber, a friend SERM.
of publicanes and *siners*; i. e. of some of X.
the worst, or most vicious and abandon-
ed, of mankind. — Again; it is said that
the son of man was betrayed into the
hands of *siners*: i. e. *Judas Iscariot* Matt.
had betrayed him into the hands of his xxvi. 45.
most cruel and malicious enemies, who see also
were desperately wicked men. — That Mark
wicked generation, who rejected and cru-
cified our Lord, is called an adulterous
and *sinful* generation; i. e. a very wick-Mark
ed generation, that had broke the mar-vi. 38.
riage contract with God, who was (as it
were) an husband to them. — At ano-
ther time, our Lord intimated to his dis-
ciples, that they ought to excel in good-
ness, and love their enemies, otherwise
they would be no better than *siners*; Luke vi.
which, in another gospel, is expressed by 32.
the word [*publicanes*:] for they were look-Matt. v.
ed upon, by the Jews, as the worst of
siners. — When *Jesus* was invited to an
entertainment, at the house of a leading
man among the Pharisees, there came
in a woman, of that city, who was a
sinner, [i. e. one, who had been a notori-
ously

SERM. ously wicked person:] and she, as a to-

X. ken of her uncommon regard for *Jesus*,
 Luke vii. washed his feet with her tears, and
 36, &c. wiped them with the hairs of her head;

and then anointed them with a costly ointment. The pharisee, who was master of the house, said within himself,

“ If this man was a prophet, he would

“ have known what sort of woman this

“ is, that toucheth him: for she is a

“ *siner* ;” i. e. a very loose, wicked per-

son. And the pharisees thought that the

touch of such persons polluted them. —

Our Lord vindicated himself, and com-

mended the woman; declaring that her

sins, which had been many, were, up-

on her sincere repentance, all forgiven.

Luke xiii.
 1, &c.

When there came some persons to

our Lord, and told him of the *Galilæ-*

ans, whose blood *Pilate* had mingled

with their sacrifices, he said, “ Do you

suppose that these *Galilæans* were *siners*

above all the *Galilæans*, [i. e. more wick-

ed and abandoned than any of their

neighbors,] because they suffered such

things?” — *The Scribes and Pharisees* are,

again, represented as murmuring that *Je-*

sus

us received, eat with, and taught, publicanes and *sinners*. Upon which, he spoke the parable of the man, who had an hundred sheep; and who, upon losing one, left the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and sought after that which was lost. And, when he had found it, he rejoiced more over that one, that had been lost, than over all the rest. After which, our Lord applies the parable thus, “ Verily I say unto you, that, in like manner, there shall be joy in heaven, over one *sinner*, that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine just [or *righteous*] persons, *who need no repentance*.” And, having spoken another parable, of like import, he again makes the same application. — Though the wicked, hypocritical pharisee boasted of his sanctity; yet the penitent publicane freely acknowledged that he had been a *sinner*; i. e. that he had formerly been a wicked person. But now he repented of that course of life; and, upon his sincere repentance, he was justified and accepted in the sight of God. — When *Jesus* went to the house of *Zacchæus*, the publicane, The *Jews* murmured,

SERM.

X.

Luke xv.

1, &c.

SERM. I

VIXX

Ver. 103

Luke

xviii. 10,

&c.

SERM. murmured, as usual, saying, "He is

X. gone to accept of an entertainment
 Lukexix. from a man that is a *finer*;" or one
 7. of a scandalous and wicked character.

For such, the *Jews* thought all the *publicans* to be.—*Jesus* foresaw when, where, and by whom, he should be put to death, and prophesied of it, unto his disciples; saying, "The son of man must be betrayed into the hands of men, that are *finers*, and be crucified;" i. e. into the hands of very wicked men, who would maliciously procure his crucifixion. —

When some of the *Jews* objected, against *Jesus*, for working miraculous cures on the sabbath day, others made answer,
 John ix. 16. "How can a man, that is a *finer*, (or wicked person) perform such miracles?"

His enemies repeated the same objection, to the man, whom *Jesus* had cured of blindness; saying unto him, "Do you give glory to God. But, as for the man that cured you, we know that he is a *finer*; i. e. a very wicked person." The man replied, "Whether he is a *finer*, [i. e. a very wicked person,] I know not. But this one thing I know;

that,

that, whereas I was formerly blind, I have now received my sight." And he argued with great strength and justice, when he inferred that such miracles proved *Jesus* to come from God. "For (says he) We know that God heareth not *sinners*, [he regardeth not the prayers of wicked men; they are an abomination to him:] But, if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." SERM. X.
Ver. 30,
&c.

There is one text more, in the four gospels, where the word [*sinner*,] occurs. And there it is applied, by St. *Peter*, to himself. But (upon *Jesus*'s working a miracle, which greatly astonished him,) he seems to have been under so great a surprize and consternation, that he hardly considered what he said. And therefore (as some other good persons have done) took to himself a character, which did not belong to him. For it does not appear that ever St. *Peter* had been a vicious man. And that is evidently the meaning of the word [*sinner*,] in all the other texts, which have been mentioned. However, the utmost that can be gathered,

SERM. thered, from these words of St. Peter,

X. can be no more than this; viz. that, in the four gospels, there is one exception from the common use of the word [*finer*.] Though there, I apprehend, it ought to be interpreted of a wicked man, as in all the other texts which have been alleged.

Thus I have gone through all the four gospels, and produced every place, where the greek word, translated *finer*, occurs. And you see that, in every place but one, if not in every place, it signifies a bad man, one of an immoral character, or vicious life: — not a good man, who has some lesser failings and infirmities; but a prevailingly wicked man. Now, when such *siners* repented; i. e. altered the habit of their tempers and lives, then they were called *penitents*, with respect to their having been once wicked: or *righteous* persons, with respect to their being, at present, prevailingly pious and virtuous.

If we take the same method with the word, which, in the text, is translated *finer*. [*righteous*,] we shall as clearly discern, that

that it is never used concerning a wicked man; unlesse there be something added, to denote the hypocrisy of those, who made pretences to be *righteous*, when they were not. — Of *Joseph*, the husband of *the virgin Mary*, it is said, “Then *Joseph*, her husband, being a just [or *righteous*] man:” not, surely, a man of a vicious character, but a good man, and resolved to treat her accordingly. — The goodnesse of God is so extensive, that he causes his sun to rise upon both good men and bad, and sendeth rain upon the just [or *righteous*] as well as upon the unjust [or *unrighteous*.] — He, that receiveth a *righteous* man, in the name of a *righteous* man, [or upon the account of his being a good man,] shall receive a *righteous* man’s reward; or a reward proportioned to such a pious and beneficent action. — Our Lord informed his disciples, that many prophets and *righteous* men, [i. e. many other good men, who were not prophets,] had desired such advantages, as they enjoyed; but died without them. — And he also acquainted them that, at the end of the world,

SERM.

X.

Matt. i.

19.

Matt. v.

45.

Matt. x.

41.

Matt.

xiii. 17.

Matt.

xiii. 49.

SERM. world, the angels shall come forth, and

X. separate the wicked from among the
 righteous; or make a thorough division

between good and bad men. — At ano-

ther time, *Jesus* charged the *scribes* and

Matt.

xxiii. 28.

see also

Luke

xviii. 9.

and xx.

20.

pharisees with being hypocrites, and ap-

pearing *righteous* unto men; i. e. seek-

ing to gain the character of holy and

good persons, though they did not de-

serve it. And again; he severely con-

demned them, for adorning the sepul-

chres of *righteous* men, [i. e. for pre-

tending a very great respect for the me-

mory of holy and good men of former

ages,] while they were persecuting the

living, that excelled in piety and good-

ness. — By *righteous blood*, our Lord

Matt.

xxiii. 29.

meant the blood of holy and righteous

men, whose lives had been unjustly ta-

Ver. 35.

ken away. And, by *righteous Abel*, we

are to understand that *Abel* was a very

good man, notwithstanding he was mur-

dered by his *wicked* brother, *Cain*.

In that noble representation, which

Jesus gave to his disciples, of the solemn

judgment, at the last day, They are

called *the righteous*, who shall be placed

at

at the right hand of the judge, and who shall be pronounced into the possession of eternal life. — Our Savior is, himself, called a just [or *righteous*] person. — And King Herod was afraid of *John Baptist*, as knowing that he was a *righteous* and holy man. — Of *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, it is said, “ that they were both *righteous* before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.” And of *Nathanael*, that he was an *Israelite* indeed, in whom was no guile.” If they had been described in the language, elsewhere made use of, by our Lord, they would have been called just [or *righteous*] persons, who need no repentance.

It was prophesied of *John Baptist*, that he should go, before *Jesus*, in the spirit and power of the prophet *Elijah*, to turn the hearts of the fathers with the children; and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just [or *righteous*], i. e. to bring the wicked, whether young or old, to repentance, and to lead the lives of the *righteous*. — Of good old *Simeon*, it is said, that he was a just [or *righteous*] man,

SERM.

X.

Matt.

xxv. 37 ;

46.

Matt.

xxvii. 19 ;

24.

Mark vi.

20.

Luke i.

6.

John i.

48.

Luke xv.

7.

Luke i.

17.

Luke ii.

25.

SERM. man, and devout. — And our Savior

X. promised the charitable man, that he
 should be recompenced at the resurrection

of the just [or *righteous* ;] i. e. when all
 holy and *righteous* persons shall be raised
 from the dead, and rewarded with eter-
 Luke xiv. 14. nal life. — When the Roman centurion

attended the execution, and saw the won-
 derful things which happened, upon the
 death of *our Lord*, he seems to have be-
 come a convert, and said, “ Certainly

Luke xxiii. 47. “ this was a *righteous* man.” And final-
 ly, *Jesus* addressed himself unto God,
 and said, “ O *righteous* father ;” thereby

John xviii. 25. intimating that he was a being of true
 goodnesse, or all moral perfection.

Thus have I gone through all the
 four gospels again, and examined every
 place, were the greek word, translated
 [*righteous* or *just*,] is made use of, con-
 cerning intelligent beings ; and it plainly
 appears, that it never signifies a wicked
 person ; nor is ever once used, singly and
 absolutely, to denote a *wicked man* ; but
 it evidently signifies one prevaillingly pi-
 ous and virtuous.

As

As our text consists of the words of SERM.
 our blessed Lord, and I am considering X.
 what he preached, I have confined my-
 self to the four gospels, where his doc-
 trine is recorded. But his apostles preach-
 ed the same doctrine: and it were easy
 to show, out of the *Acts of the Apostles*
 and their *Epistles*, that the words, [the
righteous and *sinners*,] are used, by them,
 in the same manner; and that they there,
 also, stand in direct opposition to one
 another; the one to denote a prevailingly
 good, the other a prevailingly wicked,
 person. And, when the last repented,
 they are called *penitents*, or described
 as such. But that language is not com-
 monly used concerning the habitually
 holy.

II. The second thing proposed, was, SERM.
 To make such observations, from the XI.
 words of the text, as may be for our
 instruction, direction and comfort.”
 And,

(I.) We may observe that *sinners*, or
 wicked persons, ought principally to be
 addressed, by a preacher of repentance.

Both

SERM.

XI.

Both right reason and holy scripture call upon such to turn from their evil ways, and to do that which is lawful and right. A prevailing good man can have no occasion to alter the whole, or the main, course of his life; but *siners* have. And, therefore, they ought to be called upon, to repent and amend.

(2.) We may observe the wisdom and goodnesse of our Lord's design in coming into this world. He himself saies, "I came not to call *the righteous*, but *siners*, to repentance."

Righteous men were already such, as he desired all men should be; such as *God* approves; and will, by *Jesus Christ*, accept to everlasting life. But, because the generality were *siners*; i. e. earthly-minded and vicious, regardlesse of virtue and true piety, and deep sunk in immorality and impiety; therefore he, out of amazing compassion and goodnesse, came to call them to repentance, as the only possible way to bring them to happinesse. That was his grand, his prevailing view, in preaching and teaching mankind, to instruct the ignorant, to reform the wicked,

wicked, to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. SERM.
XI.

Our blessed Lord was for a rational religion. He never called upon men to repent of those sins, which they never had committed; neither did he inculcate repentance upon all, equally and without distinction. But he singled out proper persons, and addressed them with great wisdom and justnesse. This was a reasonable method of proceeding; a conduct highly becoming the son of God, in whom dwelt all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege! every way worthy of him, who is now our lawgiver, and will finally be our wise and righteous judge!

(3.) Notwithstanding our Lord did not come to call the *righteous* to repentance; or to change the general habit of their temper and conduct; yet he came to call them to be his disciples; and thereby to lead them to amend those lesser crimes, of which any of them had been guilty; to confirm and establish them in all that was good, and to carry their virtue and piety to greater heights than ever.

When our Lord met with a good man, he did not exhort him to repent,
but

SERM. but commended him ; and confirmed and

XI. established him in his piety and virtue.

He said to *Nathanael*, " Behold an *Israelite* indeed, in whom there is no guile ! " He applauded the *Roman* centurion, and said, " he had not found so great faith, " no not in *Israel* ! "

Christianity inables a good man to carry his piety and virtue to greater lengths than ever. It contains the clearest rules, the best helps, the strongest motives, and greatest encouragements, to excel in all holiness and righteousness. And therefore, though good men were not, by *Christianity*, called to repentance, yet they were called to higher degrees of holiness ; to love God more, and their neighbor more ; to govern their passions, appetites and affections better ; to bring forth the fruits of the spirit ; and to abound in all the works of righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God.

When a good man, through the violence and sudden attack of a temptation, is surprized and overcome, *Christianity* teaches him, for the future, to be more upon his guard. And, when a good man

man increases in goodnesse, or wears out some remaining imperfection of his temper or life, he does a very wise and good thing; and, in modern phrase, may be said *to repent*. But, because of their increasing goodnesse, the scripture does not call men, *penitents*. No; the character of such, in scripture, is that of holy or *righteous* persons. — The prevailing wicked are, in scripture-language, *sinners*. And, when they have altered the disposition of their minds, and the prevailing course of their lives, then they are called *penitent* persons, and that with great propriety.

When an habitually good man falls into some flagrant act of wickednesse; and afterwards recovers, and returns to the stedy, uniform practice of piety and virtue, he may, upon that account, or in that particular instance, be properly called a *penitent*. Such was the case of King *David* and of St. *Peter*, who not only fell into great crimes, but also *repented* and rose again.

T

(4.) From

SERM. (4.) From what has been said, let
 XI. us learn to judge of characters and their
 consequences.

The *finer*, the wicked man, is out of the favor of God. And, as long as he continues wicked, he must needs remain under the divine displeasure. The *righteous*, or good, man is in the favor of God. And, as long as he continues in the way, in which he is walking, he need not doubt but that his state is good. The scriptures describe such persons, as had some failings, and were liable to those, which are often called "sins of infirmity and daily incurfion," *as perfect, holy, blamelesse without spot, without guile, and as walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blamelesse.* And I doubt not, but we have, now-a-days, many persons as holy and upright, as they were. These representations, in scripture, were designed to teach us, that innocence and absolute perfection is not expected from us: and that men, encompassed with infirmities, may take comfort, and hope for acceptance with God.

Some

Some have directed penitent persons
"to throw themselves at Christ's feet;
and to resolve that, if they perish,
they will perish there." As if it was
only, *perhaps* Christ will save the peni-
tent; or an utter uncertainty whether
he will save them or no. But it is not
perhaps all is well with sincere penitents,
and habitually holy persons; and that
God, through *Christ Jesus*, will accept
them to mercy. No! if there is any
thing to be depended upon, as true, in
the Christian revelation; it is certainly,
it is unquestionably so. God hath gi-
ven his promise; and, to his promise,
hath added his oath; that all such per-
sons may have the strongest consolation,
who have fled for refuge to this hope,
which the gospel sets before them. If
there is any thing wise and reasonable,
any thing to be depended upon, in holy
scripture, all prevaillingly good men, of
every kindred and nation, of all times
and places; — every one, that fears God
and habitually works righteousness, shall
finally be accepted of him.

SERM.

XI.

Christians, in these later ages, have been observed not to rejoice and triumph so much, as the primitive Christians did, in the prospect of a resurrection to eternal life. And several, who have lived habitually pious and virtuous lives, have been uneasy and afraid, when they have had the near prospect of death and of an everlasting world. One great reason is, Characters have been confounded: all mankind have been represented as equally *sinners*; as half brutes and half devils. And surely such abominable creatures can have no reason to rejoice. — But, though all are liable to offend, more or less, the scriptures do not commonly term those *sinners*, who are pre-vaillingly holy. No! They are, in our Savior's language, *righteous persons, who need no repentance*.

Let every prevaillingly good person, therefore, *rejoice in the Lord*; and again I say, *rejoice*. Let the prospect of everlasting and complete felicity, be your support under afflictions, and animate you to persevere in the ways of God. And
let

let wicked persons repent and amend. SERM.
And then they also may join with the XI.
righteous, and rejoice in hope of eternal
life.

(5, *lastly*.) Those ministers, who would
form themselves upon Christ's example,
must exhort *wicked* persons to change
their course of life, and establish and
confirm *the righteous* in their most holy
ways.

They should exhort all to forsake
those crimes, of which they themselves
are conscious; and to beg of God to
cleanse them from secret faults, or those
lesser failings, which have escaped their
observation, or are now out of the reach
of their memory: — and assure them
that, upon such a conduct, they may
look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus
Christ, unto eternal life. And,

Thrice happy are those persons, who
are now making religion their study and
business! And who, by patient continu-
ance in well-doing, are seeking for glory,
honor and immortal felicity! In order to
assist such, I would gladly lay before

SERM. them the doctrine of the gospel, in as

XI. clear a manner as I am able ; and would
 have them look forward with joy, to
 that future world of felicity, which God
 hath prepared for those that love him.



SER.



S E R M O N XII.



The omnipresence and omniscience
of God, a constant motive to
piety and virtue.

J O B XXii. 12, 13, 14.

*Is not God in the height of hea-
ven? And behold the height of
the stars, how high they are!
And thou saiest, "How doeth
" God know? Can he judge
" through the dark cloud?
" Thick clouds are a covering
" to him, that he seeth not;
" and he walketh in the cir-
" cuit of heaven."*

 N these words, the thought of
God's being confined to hea-
ven, or living at a great distance
from this earth and the inhabitants there-

SERM.

XII.

of, is represented as one cause of the wickedness of mankind. They phanſy that God dwells *in the height of heaven*; that he hath his habitation above the ſtars, which are exceeding high, or at an almoſt immense diſtance from us. And, as they ſuppoſe him to live at ſuch a diſtance from men and from this earthly globe, they are ready to think that he either cannot know the affairs of mankind; or, at leaſt, that he does not much regard what paſſes here below. *As he lives above the ſtars, how can God know?* — Beſides the great diſtance between him and us, dark clouds often interpoſe; which, ſurely, he cannot ſee through; but they muſt be like a garment, or thick covering, to intercept his view. And he cannot know what paſſes among men, as he lives above the ſtars; and walks only around the circle of the ſkies, or is confined to thoſe upper regions.

The book of Job is very poetical and ſublime, and contains many things which are highly reaſonable and worthy our regard. The hiſtory of that eminent man

The omnipresence of God.

281

man seems so far to have been literally SERM.
true, *viz.* that there was such a person XII.
as *Job*, that he underwent very great calamities; and that at last he was delivered from them, and flourished in a remarkable manner. He is mentioned together with real persons, as one highly in the favor of God. For, when God threatened to punish the idolatrous and wicked *Israelites*, and to accept of no intercession of the most righteous men, for their deliverance; he expressed himself in this manner, *Though these three* Ezek. xiv. 14
men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in 20.
the land, they should deliver none, but their own souls, by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. And *St. James* James v. 11.
mentions *Job's* patience under afflictions and his deliverance from them, as facts well-known and allowed to be true. — However, in this book, the history of *Job* seems to be worked up, in a dramatic or poetical manner, with the addition of many beautiful and sublime decorations.

In the preceding chapter, *Job* was vindicating himself against his friends, who

SERM.

XII.

who would needs have it, that he must have been guilty of some very great wickedness in secret; otherwise God would not have suffered him to fall under such grievous calamities. And, in his vindication, he had intimated "that, in this world, all things very often happen alike to all; and that some wicked men live in prosperity and die in peace." To that, *Eliphaz* replies, in this chapter, where the text is; and says, "that the goodness of men cannot profit God, nor their wickedness hurt him; and that, as God has nothing to hope for, or to fear, he must inflict evil upon sinners only, and that by way of punishment; that, therefore the calamities of *Job* plainly proved him a wicked man; who had oppressed his brother, been cruel to the poor and needy, but ready to serve the rich and the mighty; while the widow and orphan were treated basely by him. Therefore (says he) snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee. Or thou art involved in darkness, like the blind;

" or

The omnipresence of God.

283

SERM.
XII.

" or plunged in affliction, like those
" who are overwhelmed in deep waters.
" And, as an encouragement for thee to
" persevere in thy wicked courses, thou
" hast been ready to say, *Is not God*
" *in the height of heaven? And behold*
" *the height of the stars, how high they*
" *are!* And thou hast said, *How doeth*
" *God know? Can he judge through the*
" *dark cloud? Thick clouds are a cover-*
" *ing to him, that he seeth not; and he*
" *walketh in the circuit of heaven.*"

I am afraid that this, which was a mistake in the days of *Job*, is not yet intirely rooted out; but that some are still apt to conceive of God, as of a grave and venerable old man, sitting upon a throne in heaven; that he lives there, and there only; and that all he knows of men and of what passes upon earth, is, either by sending angels to get him information; or by looking down from heaven, himself, and observing what passes among us: but that he is, by no means, actually present with us, at all times and in all places; or, by his constant and immediate presence, thoroughly acquaint-

SERM. acquainted with us and all our affairs;
XII. that he must needs be a stranger to our
most secret actions, if not to the most
public : — Thus, I am afraid, some are
apt to conceive of God ; though he is
really omnipresent ; and thereby hears
every word we speak, and sees every ac-
tion we perform ; nay knows all our
designs and intentions ; and from what
principles, and with what views, we act,
as well as of what nature and kind our
actions are.

Now, as I scarcely know of any one
motive against sin, and to constant care
and watchfulnesse in the performance
of our duty, which would be of greater
force and influence, if rightly under-
stood, and diligently attended to, than
that of the *omnipresence* of almighty God,
our creator, our wise and righteous law-
giver, and our most just and merciful
judge ; — I think it may be of service
to have this matter explained, and its
consequences clearly laid before us. To
which end, I propose,

I. To

The omnipresence of God.

285

SERM.

XII.

I. To state the notion of God's *omnipresence*.

II. Prove that this perfection belongs to God.

III. Clear up some difficulties and answer some objections. And,

IV. Conclude with a suitable application.

I. I am to state the notion of God's *omnipresence*. By which I understand, in brief, that he is excluded no place, nor included in any finite space.

He is excluded no place: he is present in heaven, and present on earth, and present in every part of the universe, at one and the same time. He is not only present in this particular place, where we are now assembled to worship him; but, at all times and in all places, his presence is with us, and both surrounds and pervades us; so that *in him we literally live, and move, and have our being*. And God is not only present with us, but with all mankind, in every country and nation; yea and
with

SERM. with every creature, in mountains or
 XII. forrests, by sea or by land; all, all are
 encompassed with his presence, and that
 continually. And, beyond the confines
 of this earth, or planetary system, the
 presence of God is infinitely extended;
 so that there is no creature, which he
 has made, be it great or small, mean
 or considerable, high or low, nigh-hand
 to us, or afar off and at the greatest
 distance from us, but God is always
 present with it. And the *Psalmist* ex-
 pressed this with great force and just-
 nesse, when he said, *Whither shall I go*
from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flie
from thy presence? If I ascend up into
heaven, thou art there. If I make my
bed in hell, [in the grave, or in the deep,]
behold thou art there. If I take the wings
of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost
parts of the sea, even there shall thy
hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall
hold me,

Psal.
 cxxxix.
 7,—10.

The creation may, for any thing we
 know, be large, beyond the bounds of
 our imaginations. There may be globe
 beyond globe, and world beyond world.

From

The omnipresence of God.

287

SERM.

XII.

From the little we know of it, the creation appears to be of a very large extent: and yet, with all the universe of created beings, God is present continually. But, though the creation be very large and extensive, yet it is finite, and consequently there is some end of it. It must have bounds, it must have limits. But, if you were come to the utmost parts of the creation, you would not find the divine being bounded and limited there; as his works are. But he is infinitely extended, beyond the limits of the creation. Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him. He is higher than heaven, deeper than the abyſſe, longer than the earth and broader than the ſea. Heaven and earth, the whole creation, all taken together, is a temple too narrow for him to dwell in, ſo as to limit or confine his preſence. It is not within the power of human imagination to comprehend ſo vaſt an idea, as that of *the omnipresence of God.*

If we ſhould ſuppoſe ourſelves as a center, and from thence let our thoughts run out on every ſide, as far as human
imagi-

SERM. imagination could stretch, we should be
 XII. able to make but a small progresse, in
 ~~~~~ conceiving the immensity of God. Be-  
 cause we-our-selves are finite, we cannot  
 fully comprehend any thing that is ac-  
 tually infinite. Though we can have  
 some idea of such an extension, as will  
 admit of the addition of one quantity  
 to another, without end, or without  
 being exhausted.

The presence of God, I look upon  
 to be actually infinite; and that he is  
 equally present every where, though he  
 does not every where make equal ma-  
 nifestations of himself.

In the infinite space, he has planted  
*a creation* of great variety and of a  
 surprizing extent. And, in different parts  
 of that creation, he manifests himself af-  
 ter different ways and manners, I sup-  
 pose God to be as much present here,  
 as he is in heaven; only there he has  
 created a glory, some bright and shining  
 manifestation of himself; before which  
 the cælestial inhabitants approach, and  
 prostrate themselves, in acts of homage  
 and of the most profound veneration.

And,

*The omnipresence of God.* 289

And, because he there makes such an appearance, the throne of God is said to be there; and he is, upon that account, represented as dwelling in heaven; as if that was his house, palace, temple, or stated habitation. It is a very different manifestation from what he makes of himself unto us, and is represented as light inaccessible to mortal men, and too full of glory for us to behold and live. It is sometimes called *the excellent glory, the habitation of his holiness, and the place where his honor dwells*. In that thrice happy part of the creation dwells *the redeemer*, and an innumerable company of holy angels, who are all perfectly happy in the presence and favor of God; and there we hope to spend the happy days of eternity.

But, with such of his rational creatures, as have transgressed his laws, and continued impenitent, God will also be present; though in a very different manner, and with very different effects. *It is a fearful thing for such to fall into the hands of the living God.*

U

While

SERM.  
XII.

SERM.

XII.

While we are upon earth, God is as much present with us, as ever he will be; only we see him not, nor does he make such a glorious manifestation of himself, as he does to the inhabitants of heaven. The way, by which we come to know that there is *a God*, and that he is a being of great wisdom and power, is by attending to the visible works of his hands, those parts of creation and providence, which lie within our view. From these visible effects, we are led to the first and invisible cause, who must be selfexistent and necessary, and indued with wisdom and power; as he has manifested such exquisite skill, and mighty power, in the things, which he has produced. And, though we cannot see God, yet he is not, at any time, far from any one of us; for in him we continually live, move, and have our being.

The various effects, which flow, from the presence of God, to various creatures, and in different parts of the creation, are all wisely calculated for promoting the general good. But, however



*The omnipresence of God.*

291

SERM.  
XII.

ever various the effects of the divine presence may be, in different parts of the universe, he is equally present every where.

And is not, as wicked men would gladly persuade themselves, confined to the height of heaven, or acquainted only with what passes above the stars. Thick clouds are no covering to him, that he should not, in any place, see and know what is done. The darkest night to him is like the blaze of noon, And he does not walk round the circle of the heavens, in such a manner, as not to be present, at the same time, upon earth, and in every part of the creation.

In this sense, do I understand the *immensity*, or *omnipresence*, of God.

II. It was proposed to prove that this perfection belongs to God.

And this proof may be taken either from *reason*, or *holy scripture*.

(I.) The proof from *reason* is more difficult, and therefore requires greater attention.

The idea of immensity, or infinite space, forces itself upon us, as what is

SERM. absolutely necessary. And to try to suppose the contrary; or to suppose that space is finite and limited, would immediately involve us in absurdity and contradiction. For, if you suppose space to be finite and limited; by what is it bounded? by what can you suppose it limited? if it were bounded by walls of adamant, those walls must have some space to exist in. And there must likewise be space beyond them, as well as on this side of them. So that make what supposition you will, you will find that immensity, or infinite space, is of absolute necessity; and what you cannot suppose the contrary to, without a contradiction. — Now, if there be such a thing as immensity, or infinite space; there must be some being, of which that is a property, or perfection. For of nothing, nothing can be affirmed. Or, in other words, what is nothing, can have no properties. And, as immensity, or infinite space, will be readily allowed not to be a substance; and yet is eternal and absolutely necessary, it must be a property of  
of

*The omnipresence of God.*

293

of the eternal and absolutely necessary SERM.  
being, or substance. XII.

Some of the *Schoolmen*, indeed, have described the *eternity* of God as *a moment*; and his *immensity*, or omnipresence, as *a point*. I envy no man the use of such language: nor any reputation for learning; that can be acquired, by such quaint ways of speaking. Some learned men have questioned, whether they had any ideas affixed to these words. I have, sometimes, been ready to suspect that they designed thereby to intimate, that there is no more variety, in the eternity of God, than there is in one moment; nor any more variety, in the simple, uncompounded substance of God, than there is in one point. But, if that was their meaning, their expressions are so subtile and obscure, that it is hardly worth while to inquire what they intended thereby,

For my own part, I take the immensity, or omnipresence, of God, in the literal and obvious sense; and look upon God as actually extended, through the whole universe, and infinitely beyond the



SERM. bounds of it ; that he filleth all in all ;  
 XII. that we cannot go out of his presence ;  
 that he surrounds us, like the air ; and  
 likewise pervades us, and every thing,  
 with continuity of being ; and that the  
 creation literally exists in him. And I  
 look upon it as a proof of the immen-  
 sity of God, that the very idea of im-  
 mensity is of such a nature, as to force it-  
 self upon us, if we at all think about  
 it ; and that the contrary cannot be so  
 much as supposed, without a contradic-  
 tion. And, if immensity be necessary,  
 and be allowed not to be a substance, it  
 must be a property of the one self-exist-  
 ent, infinite and eternal being.—That is  
 the proof of *God's omnipresence*, from rea-  
 son, or the light of nature.

(2.) *Holy Scripture*, in many places, re-  
 presents God as *omnipresent*.

To this purpose, St. Paul said, among  
 the philosophers at *Athens*, God is not far  
 from every one of us. For in him we live,  
 move, and have our being. *Isaiah* the pro-  
 phet introduces God, as saying, *Heaven*  
*is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.*  
*Where is the House that ye build unto me ?*  
 and

Acts  
 xvii. 27,  
 28.

Isaiah  
 lxvi. 1.

## The omnipresence of God.

295

and where is the place of my rest? St. SERM.  
 Stephen took notice, that Solomon builded XII.  
 God an house: and added, *Howbeit the* <sup>Act vii.</sup>  
*most high dwelleth not in temples made with* 47, &c.  
*hands.* And then he quotes what has  
 been mentioned, from the prophet *Isaiah*,  
*viz. Heaven is my throne, and the earth is*  
*my footstool. What house will ye build me,*  
*saith the Lord? Or, what is the place of*  
*my rest? But what the prophet Isaiah and*  
*St. Stephen both said, is no other, than an*  
*allusion to what King Solomon himself had*  
*said, at the dedication of the temple, But* <sup>I Kings</sup>  
*will God, indeed, dwell on the earth? Be-* <sup>viii. 27.</sup>  
*hold, the heaven and heaven of heavens*  
*cannot contain thee. How much lesse this*  
*house, which I have builded?*

God proved himself, to the ignorant <sup>I Kings</sup>  
*Syrians, to be present in the vallies, as* <sup>xx. 28,</sup>  
*well as upon the hills.*—To me it is very <sup>&c.</sup>  
 evident, that no being can act any where,  
 but only where it is present. And God  
 has proved himself present, by his ope-  
 rations, both in heaven and upon earth,  
 And accordingly, the prophet *Daniel* saith, <sup>Dan. vi.</sup>  
*—He worketh signs and wonders in heaven* 27.  
*and on earth.*

U 4

I, like

SERM. I, likewise, take his *omniscience* to be  
 XII. founded upon his *omnipresence*, and to be  
 a proof of it. Now the wise man has  
 Prov. xv. observed that *the eyes of the Lord are in*  
 3. *every place, beholding the evil and the good.*  
 And it is elsewhere said, that *the eyes of*  
 the Lord are upon the ways of man, and  
 he seeth all his goings. There is no dark-  
 ness, nor shadow of death, where the work-  
 Job  
 xxxiv. 21, 22. *ers of iniquity may hide themselves.* And, to  
 the same purpose, the prophet *Jeremiah*  
 Jerem. introduces God, as saying, *Am I a God at*  
 xxiii. 23, *hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide*  
 24. *himself in secret places, that I shall not see*  
*him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill hea-*  
*ven and earth? saith the Lord.* And the  
*Apostle* confirms the same truth, by say-  
 Heb. iv. ing, *Neither is there any creature that is*  
 13. *not manifest in his sight. But all things*  
*are naked and open unto the eyes of him,*  
*with whom we have to do.* And, to name  
 no more proofs from scripture, *The Psalmist*  
 Psalm  
 cxxxix. 1, &c. *first mentions the omniscience of God,*  
 and then descends to his *omnipresence*, as  
 the ground and foundation of it. O God,  
 thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou  
 knowest my-sitting down, and my rising-up.  
 Thou



*The omnipresence of God.*

297

Thou understandest my thought afar off, SERM.  
Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, XII.  
and art acquainted with all my ways. For  
there is not a word in my tongue; but lo, O  
Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou  
hast beset me behind and before, and laid  
thine hand upon me. Such knowlege is too  
wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot at-  
tain unto it. And then he procedes to  
describe the divine being, as present in  
heaven, on earth, in the deep, and every  
where.

The proof, therefore, from scripture,  
is full and clear; and such as may easily  
be understood,

III. We now procede, as was proposed, to SERM.  
clear up some difficulties and answer some XIII.  
objections.

To the representation, which has been  
made, of *God's omnipresence*, it may pos-  
sibly be objected, " That the scriptures  
" frequently speak of God, as dwelling  
" in heaven; as coming down from  
" thence, to visit the children of men:  
" like a finite, circumscribed being, as  
" appearing to *Moses*, and talking with  
" him

SERM. "him, as a man talks with his friend,

XIII. "That he went out of *Egypt*, at the

"head of the *Israelitish* army, and walk-  
 "ed with them through the red sea;  
 "that he was visible, for many days to-  
 "gether, at *Mount Sinai*, when the *Jew-*  
 "*ish law* was there delivered. That he  
 "traveled up and down, with the *Is-*  
 "*raelites*, forty years, in the wilderness,  
 "Is he not, also, represented, as after-  
 "wards residing, in a glorious and visi-  
 "ble manner, in the tabernacle of *Moses*;  
 "and removing from thence, into the  
 "temple built by King *Solomon*? And  
 "there are many such passages, in scrip-  
 "ture, all to the same purpose."

But, as to these and all passages of like  
 import, the true solution is, that they are  
 figurative expressions; and not to be un-  
 derstood in such a sense, as would confine  
 the presence of God to any one place,  
 either heaven or earth, the tabernacle of  
*Moses* or the temple of *Solomon*.

The scriptures do, indeed, represent God  
 as making a glorious manifestation of him-  
 self in *heaven*; as appearing visibly on  
*Mount Sinai*; as conducting the *Israelites*  
 through

*The omnipresence of God.*

299

SERM.  
XIII.

through the red sea, and through the wilderness, in the appearance of a cloud, by day; and of a pillar of fire, by night; and as residing in the cloud of glory, in the tabernacle and in the temple. But the scriptures do, elsewhere, lead us to the right interpretation of such passages, and expressly say, that *heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him*: and that it is impossible to go any where from his presence, or flee from his spirit.—His sitting upon the circle of the earth, riding upon the wings of the wind; and descending, or moving from place to place, to observe the actions of men, are no more than easy and familiar ways of intimating, that he is a being of perfect knowledge, who extends his regards to all the actions and affairs of men, and that as exactly as we could do, by being present, or moving from place to place, carefully to observe what passed there. God is said to dwell with such as are humble and contrite in heart: by which we are to understand, that they are constantly the objects of his favorable regard; as much as a man's children can be, who live with him,



SERM. him, and are under his protection and  
 XIII. care, day and night.—When God is re-  
 presented as drawing near to any person,  
 family, or nation; or as hiding his face,  
 or departing, from any other person, fa-  
 mily, or nation; the meaning is not, that  
 God's presence, or substance, can with-  
 draw from any place, or any part of his  
 creation; but only that he will assist,  
 bless, or succor that person, family, or  
 nation, that fears and obeys him; and  
 that he will punish, or take his favor  
 from, such as are wicked and impenitent.  
 And the rise of such language is taken  
 from what commonly passes among men.  
 For we readily afford our presence and  
 assistance unto such as we love; but with-  
 draw, and depart, from such as we dis-  
 like.

Again; some may perhaps think “that  
 “ it is below the dignity of the divine  
 “ being, to suppose him actually present  
 “ in every place. Or, that such a no-  
 “ tion seems to be a reviving the opinion  
 “ of the antient philosophers, who look-  
 “ ed upon God as *the soul of the world.*”

But

*The omnipresence of God.*

301

But to such objections, it is easy to reply, that God cannot suffer any thing, from the presence of any creature whatever. Fire and water, tempest and stormy wind, snow and hail, which are all his creatures, and fulfil his will, cannot hurt the Almighty, or have any influence upon him, so as either to defile him, or render him in the least unhappy. — And, as to his being the soul of the world, that opinion seems to be wholly groundless; provided we thereby mean, that the material world is his body; and that he animates it, like a soul: Or, that he is acted upon, by the material world, as well as acts upon it; just as our souls are greatly affected by our bodies, as well as operate upon them. In such a sense, *God cannot be the soul of the world*; because he is not passive, nor liable to any impression from material objects, or from any creature whatever.

I would just add, to what has been said, that God is a distinct being from the world, though the world exists in him; as much as we are distinct from the air, in which we live and move: Or,

as

SERM.  
XIII.

SERM. as the fishes of the sea are, from the  
 XIII. water, in which they live and move.

### APPLICATION.

(1.) As God is *omnipresent*, he must be a pure spirit. And all those places, in holy scripture, where a body, or any parts or members of a body, are ascribed to him, must not be understood literally, but in a figurative sense.

He cannot have an hand, or an eye; an ear, or a mouth; or a body like unto the human body; or any bodily shape, or parts, whatever; who fills heaven and earth; and whom heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain.

(2.) As God is *omnipresent*, how groundlesse and absurd must *idolatry* be?

There is no picture, or statue, can represent the *omnipresent* God. What image would men make of him? or to what likenesse can they compare him? He has no shape, no bounds and limits of his being. He, therefore, cannot be represented by any similitude of the contrivance and art of man. Forasmuch as in him we live, move, and have our being,



ing, we ought not to think that the *Deity* SERM.  
is like unto gold, silver, or stone, graven XIII.  
by the art and device of man.

(3.) As God is *omnipresent*, men may worship him every where, provided they worship him in spirit and truth.

Indeed, if God should make a visible appearance any where, or command men to pay a particular reverence to any particular place ; then the divine command would be a reason for such a distinction of places. But, under the gospel, God has enjoined no such distinction of places; but hath commanded us to *pray every every*, provided we *lift up holy hands*. And it is not any invention of men, nor any the most solemn consecration of a particular building, or spot of ground, that can render it more holy than any other ; or confine the peculiar presence, or regard, of that being, who is present every where, and fills heaven and earth.

*Our Savior* preached in a boat, in the wilderness, by the high-way side, upon a mountain, in a field ; or in a private house ; as well as in the synagogues and in the temple, the usual places for divine worship.

SERM. worship. And, wherever two or three  
 XIII. are gathered together in his name, they  
 may expect the favorable presence and  
 blessing of God.

(4.) As God is equally present every  
 where, it must be an indifferent thing,  
 which way we turn our faces, when we  
 addresse ourselves unto him in worship.

*The Jews*, in their private worship, are  
 said to turn their faces towards *Jerusalem*,  
 in whatever part of the world they are.  
 And, in their synagogue worship, they  
 turn towards the west, and sometimes  
 bow towards that part of the heavens.—  
*The Mahometans* worship, with their faces  
 turned towards the temple at *Mecca* :  
 and the *Arabs* call that part of the hea-  
 vens, towards which men worship, *Al-*  
*Kibla*.

The most antient idolatry seems to have  
 been that of *worshiping the sun*, that most  
 glorious luminary, the source of light,  
 heat, vegetation, and numberlesse bles-  
 sings. And, having a long time worship-  
 ed towards the rising sun, it became af-  
 terwards a custom to worship towards the  
 east ; in what part of the heavens soever  
 the

*The omnipresence of God.*

305

the sun then was. Hence it came to be a rule, to build their altars and temples looking towards the east.—In direct opposition to that antient, idolatrous custom, of *worshipping towards the east*, God ordered the *Israelites* to worship him, at the tabernacle and temple; with their faces turned *towards the west*. And accordingly, by divine appointment, *the holy of holies* was placed at the west end of the tabernacle and of the temple.—This will help to explaine a difficult text of scripture. When the prophet *Ezekiel* was carried, in the visions of God, from *Babylon* to *Jerusalem*, he saw there, with grief, several of the idolatrous practices of the *Israelites*, even in and about the temple of the Lord. And, among other abominations, the prophet said, *And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house. And behold! at the door of the tabernacle of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun, toward the east*, i. e. they were *Israelites*,

SERM.

XIII.

Ezek.

viii. 16.

See also

Jerem.

xxxii.

33, 34.



SERM. who had apostatized from their own religion, and were gone over to the idolatry of the *Magi*, who *worshipped the rising sun*.

It appears somewhat strange, that any *Christians* should bow to the east, or turn their faces more peculiarly that way, when they are worshipping God ; inasmuch as God ordered his antient people, the *Jews*, to turn the contrary way, to avoid that *idolatrous custom*. *Christians*, also, know that God is no more in *the east*, than in any other point of the heavens. And, therefore, it must be an indifferent thing which way we turn our faces, when we pay our homage to him ; provided we worship him in spirit and truth.

(5.) As God is every where present, how easily may he inspect and manage the whole creation ?

Some have represented the *omnipresence of God*, as his *sensorium* ; i. e. as we, by our five *senses*, receive the notices of external objects ; God, by his constant presence with all things, is acquainted with all the creatures and all their circumstances, relations, and properties. He

at

at first made the material world, as well SERM.  
as every other creature. And, as he is XIII.  
always present with every part of his crea-  
tion, he can easily support his creatures,  
continue the stated course of things; or  
interpose, and alter the stated course, as  
his wisdom directs.

*Epicurus* represented the Gods as con-  
fined to heaven, and as not troubling  
themselves with what passes here below.  
But how much more just and noble is  
the Christian representation of God, *viz.*  
that he is always in every place, behold-  
ing the evil and the good?

When we consider the vast extent of  
the creation, and the astonishing num-  
ber and variety of creatures, which God  
has made; we are sometimes ready to  
fear least God should overlook us, amidst  
the prodigious extent and multiplicity of  
the works of his hands. From such a  
view of things, the *Psalmist* was led to  
cry out, *When I consider thy heavens, the* Psalm  
*work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars,* viii. 3, 4.  
*which thou hast ordained; what is man,*  
*that thou art mindful of him? and the son*  
*of man, that thou visitest him? — But,*  

X 2when

SERM. when we again consider seriously, that

**XIII.** God is omnipresent and omniscient, constantly indued with infinite wisdom, almighty power, and superlative goodness; all such thoughts vanish. And we may depend upon the divine care of every one of us, as much as if he had but one creature to take care of.

There is not a motion in the material world, nor a thought in the intellectual world, but what lies intirely open to his view. And an infinitely perfect being, every where present, can, with the utmost ease, manage and govern his whole creation.

(6, *Lastly.*) What a strong and mighty motive should the *omnipresence of God* be unto all of us, to take care that we behave becoming so great a presence?

Some of the *antients* have recommended it to us to phansy *Socrates* or *Cato* (men renowned for strict virtue) as constantly present with us, and inspecting our behavior; that we may be led thereby to behave well. But what is the presence of *Socrates* or *Cato*? what the inspection of the greatest and best of men?



men? Or, what are the eyes of all mankind, to the presence and inspection of almighty God? He sees us in public, he sees us in secret. His presence is always with us, surrounds and pervades us. He stands by, as a witness to all our conduct. And, though we may go out of our own country, dwell among strangers, or flee into the wilderness, or into our closets and most secret retirements; yet we cannot go any where from the presence of God. The most gloomy cavern, or deepest retirement; dwelling below the foundations of the mountains, or even at the very center of the earth, could not conceal us from God, any more than appearing in the most public theatre. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—It is in vain for any wicked man to phanfy that he can get out of God's sight, or commit sin so secretly that he shall not know of it. In vain to say, *Is not God in the height of heaven, and lives above the stars?* And, therefore, *How doeth God know what I do?* For he can see through the darkest cloud. And he is not confined to the

SERM.  
XIII.

SERM. circuit of heaven, so as to be, at any  
 XIII. time, absent from this earth, or ignorant  
 of any thing that passes here below.

The adulterer or lewd person, the fraudulent and dishonest, the cruel and revengeful, the drunkard, the liar, the close and subtle hypocrite, may carry on their pursuits so secretly, as to conceal themselves, for some time, from the observation of men. But there is a much greater person standing by them, who sees all they do, hears all they say, and is perfectly acquainted with all their thoughts and intentions. He knows them without disguise, and judges truly concerning them. There is no darknesse, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves from God.

What a terrible thought must this needs be to men of vice? To consider that he, who is their creator and law-giver, and must be their supreme judge, is now standing by them, a witness to all their actions, words, and thoughts; that he is present with them continually, at home and abroad, in public and  
 in

*The omnipresence of God.*

311

in secret! that at death they shall still SERM.  
be incompassed with the presence of God! XIII.  
that they cannot flie to any place, to shelter them from his dreadful and righteous judgment!

But the consideration of the omnipresence of God is not more terrible to the wicked, than it is joyous to the righteous and good. They may be oppressed, and persecuted, for their very goodnesse; their innocence slandered, and their names treated with scandal and censure; but God is always present with them, and knows their integrity. He sees when they pray in secret, or in secret perform acts of justice or generosity, kindnesse or charity. And he, who seeth in secret, will at last reward them openly.

*An omnipresent God* is their friend and support, a very present help to them in every time of need. With them it is one of the strongest motives to a life of piety and virtue, that they are always in the presence of God, and consider him as inspecting all their conduct. In the greatest temptations, or trials, it is a mighty motive to behave well; that they shall



SERM. thereby approve themselves in the sight  
 XIII. of him, whose approbation is more than  
 that of the whole world. It is a constant spur to increase in knowlege and goodnesse, to have such an inspector of all their actions. They would blush to do any thing unbecoming so holy and grand a presence.

To approve themselves unto God, the omnipresent and omniscient being, by a life of strict virtue and undissembled piety, is regarded by them as the great businesse of this state of trial; and the principal reason of their being planted for a few years upon earth. At death they, with humble, joyful hope, resign their spirits into the hands of him who made them, For, though they go out of the body, and know not whither they are to go next; yet they know that God, their almighty friend, is present every where, and both able and willing to take care of them, And that he, who placed them for a few years upon earth, blessed them here with many mercies, and approved of their prevailing goodnesse, will take care to bring them into a better state and happier world;

*The omnipresence of God.*

313

world; where there will be fulnesse of SERM.  
joy, and rivers of pleasure, and that for XIII.  
ever-more, }

Into that thrice happy state, may an abundant entrance be, at last, administered unto us all; by the mediation of *Jesus Christ, our Lord*: to whom be all glory and honor, both now, and through everlasting ages, AMEN! and AMEN!



S E R.

world; where there will be fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasure, and that for evermore.

Into that thrice happy state, may an abundant entrance be, at last admitted, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom be all glory and honor, both now, and through everlasting ages, Amen! and Amen!





## S E R M O N XIV.



The excellence of moral duties  
above positive institutions.

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MAT. xii. part of the 7th verse.

*I will have mercy and not sacrifice.--*



IN matters of religion, we SERM.  
ought to keep close to the XIV.  
appointment of GOD. But  
as, among the things,  
which GOD hath com-  
manded, all are not of equal importance,  
it highly concerns us to understand what  
stresse

SERM. stresse we ought to lay upon every part;  
 XIV. that we may, in the most just and rational manner, comply with the will of God, and at last be happy in his favor.

*The Pharisees* were a superstitious sect among the Jews, who made great pretences to religion; and, at the same time, were immoral men. And (like superstitious persons of all ages and countries) they were guilty both of teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; and of laying the greatest stresse upon things of the least moment, in their observation of the laws of God.—They had certain traditional rules, about washing their hands, before they sate down to meat; and about washing of pots, and cups, and brazen vessels. And these they observed, as matters of religion; while they neglected those *moral* precepts, which are of the highest importance. Again; they tithed mint, annise and cummin, and were very curious in proportioning the tithe of those small seeds and herbs. But, at the same time, they omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, fidelity, and the love

love of God. Whereas *they ought to* SERM.  
*have done the one, and not have left the* XIV.  
*other undone.*

In the begining of the chapter, where our text is, we find, they blamed the disciples of our Lord; because, as they walked through the corn fields, on the sabbath day, they gathered some of the corn, rubed out the ears, and eat them, to satisfie their hunger. It was not, because the corn was another man's property: for it was one of the Jewish laws, *When thou comest into the standing-corn of* Deut.  
*thy neighbors, then thou mayest pluck the* xxiii. 25.  
*ears with thine hand; but thou shall not move a sickle into thy neighbors standing-corn,* i. e. they were not to cut down and carry away a large quantity. But any Jew might have plucked the ears with his hands; and have eat what he had gathered, in that manner. Those superstitious pharisees would have accounted that action of the apostles lawful, on any other day; but, as it was, they looked upon it as breaking the sabbath. Accordingly, they said unto Jesus, *Behold, your disciples do that, which is not lawful*

to



SERM. *to do, on the sabbath day.* Our Lord vin-

XIV. dicated his disciples ; because they were

hungry, and therefore had occasion to eat.

So the hunger and present necessity of

*David*, and the young men that were

with him, led the priest to give them

1 Sam.  
xxi. 6.

*the shew-bread* ; which, in other circum-

stances, it would not have been lawful

for them to eat. But necessity had no

law ; and therefore *David* and his com-

pany, who were not priests, did, in their

pressing necessity, eat of it, without any

blame.—There is another reason assigned

Mark ii.  
27.

by our Lord, *viz. That the sabbath was*

*made for man, and not man for the sabbath :*

or that such positive duties were enjoined

for the use and benefit of man ; and not

man created, that he might observe such

positive institutions, to his detriment ; or

when moral duties came in competition

with them.—Again ; The outward rest

of the sabbath day was enjoined in the

Jewish law. For *six days they were to la-*

*bor and do all their work : but the seventh*

*being the sabbath (or rest) of the Lord their*

*God, they were not, on that day, to do any*

*manner of work,* In that, their Law was

very

very plane and expresse. And yet, who-  
ever made use of his reason, in the in-  
terpretation of that law, must needs see  
that works of necessity and mercy were  
to be excepted; and that, in such cases,  
men ought to work. So the priests, on  
that day, slew the cattle, and labored  
very hard, in one of the courts of the  
temple, in preparing and offering the sa-  
crifices required. And, though they pro-  
faned (or broke the outward rest of)  
the sabbath day, they were blamelesse,  
and did nothing but what was their duty  
to do. And, if the temple service ex-  
cused them, *Jesus*, who was of greater  
excellence and dignity than the temple,  
could dispense with his disciples, in that  
particular. And then come in the  
words of our text; *But, if you had  
known what that expression meaneth, I  
will have mercy and not sacrifice, you  
would not have condemned the guiltlesse.*  
*Wherefore, \* upon all these accounts, The  
son*

\* That phrase, [*the son of man,*] doeth, in the four  
gospels, never signifie *any man*, but is always (as I appre-  
hend) to be understood of *Christ*. And the *vs: wherefore*,  
Mark ii. 28. denotes that, what follows, is the general  
infer-

SERM. *son of man is Lord of the sabbath day*, and

XIV. can dispense with the outward rest of that day, in his disciples; in cases, where it is proper, or when any good reason requires it.

The words of our text are a quotation from one of the antient prophets, where  
 Hosea vi. 6. it is thus expressed. *For I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowlege of G O D more than burnt-offerings.* Our Lord made use of this passage, at another time, to vindicate his own conduct. The pharisees pretended that to touch, or converse with, publicanes and other vitious persons, was contracting defilement, and rendered a religious person impure and polluted. Our Lord intimated, that that positive injunction of their wise men was not to be regarded by him, who kept company with them, in order  
 Matt. ix. 13. to reform them; *For G O D will have mercy*

inference from all the arguments, that had been mentioned, q. d. “ *Wherefore*, upon all these accounts, or for “ the reasons alleged, I (*the son of man*) can assure my “ disciples that they have done nothing amiss. For I “ have power to dispense with their observing the out- “ ward rest of this day, especially when I can assign so “ many and such good reasons for what they do”



mercy and not sacrifice; or God regards the promoting good morals more than any ceremonial, or positive, injunctions. SERM.  
XIV.

God required *sacrifices* of the Jews, as well as *mercy*. But the *Hebrews*, very frequently, when they would expresse the comparative excellence of one thing above another, deny the one and assert the other; and, in this case, represent God, as saying, *I desired mercy and not sacrifice*. But we should expresse it, in our language, after this manner, *I desired mercy rather than sacrifice*; or, *I preferred mercy to sacrifice*. Though I required both; yet I laid the greater stresse upon *mercy*; and *sacrifice* was comparatively of lesse moment; being a thing that might, upon some occasions, be dispensed with, like the outward rest of the sabbath day. Whereas works of mercy are necessary, or evermore obligatory, and can never be dispensed with.

MERCY is one of the *moral virtues*, or one of the branches of everlasting righteousness: whereas *sacrifice* was appointed by *positive institution*. And, as our Lord extended that fine passage of the

SERM. prophet's to the case of his disciples, to prove  
 XIV. that they might lawfully, on the sabbath  
 day, rub out the ears of corn, to satisfy  
 their hunger, though thereby they broke  
 the outward rest of that day; so we may,  
 by way of parity, extend it to all *moral*  
*duties* whatever; and from hence learn,  
 "to prefer such duties to all *positive in-*  
*stitutions.*"

But, as this is a subject of great moment, it may be highly proper to enter into a more particular consideration of it. For there are few things, which more concern our practice, as Christians.—Some pretend that, by *morality*, we are to understand external civility, or honesty, temperance, and sobriety: that we must restrain *morality* to mere outward actions, without regarding the principles, from which such actions flow; or that it concerns our duty towards *men* only, but does not take in our duty towards God also. Whereas *the sum of the moral law is to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves, i. e. it comprehends*

hends all the branches of righteousness, **SERM.**  
or true holiness. And, in this compre- **XIV.**  
hensive sense, would I be understood all  
along, in this discourse, to make use of  
the words, *morality, the moral law, mo-  
ral virtue, moral duties*, and the like. And  
would have you take particular notice,  
and carefully remember, that, by *morali-  
ty*, is to be understood *the loving the Lord  
our GOD with all our hearts, and our  
neighbor as ourselves*; or those duties,  
which we owe to GOD, our neighbor and  
ourselves, as far as they are deducible  
from *right reason*, or the nature of things.  
But, by *positive institutions*, we are to un-  
derstand such duties, as we could not  
have deduced from the reason and nature  
of things; but which are appointed of  
GOD, and discovered to us by *revelati-  
on*.—And, that such *moral duties* are of  
greater importance than *positive instituti-  
ons*, will evidently appear, from the fol-  
lowing particulars,



SERM.

XIV.

I. *Moral virtue* (or true holiness) is enjoined both by *reason* and *scripture*: Whereas *positive duties* are enjoined by *scripture* alone.

*Moral duties* may not only be deduced from the reason and nature of things, or from the several relations, in which we stand, to God or men; but they are likewise commanded of God, in *scripture*, and there enforced by the divine authority. Whereas our obligation to observe *positive institutions* takes its rise from the divine authority, and could be known no otherwise, than by *revelation*. Now, where there is greater light and evidence, concerning any part of our duty, and more obligations to practise it, there a greater stress ought certainly to be laid upon it. This, I think, we may justly infer from the known wisdom and goodness of almighty God. For, as he cannot be thought to require as much from him, who had no such opportunity of knowing his will, as from him, who knows,

or

or may know, it; so he cannot be thought to require, that an equal stress should be laid upon any part of his will, where he himself has not laid an equal stress. SERM. XIV.

*Moral virtue* (or everlasting righteousness) he requires twice, or upon two accounts, by *reason* and by his own *authority*, declared in *scripture*. But what is *positive* is enjoined by the divine authority alone. The *moral law* is founded upon the eternal, unalterable reason and fitness of things; and might have been found out, by a careful, impartial inquiry, without a revelation; it being that law, which (as St. Paul expresses it) is written upon men's hearts; and by which their consciences are led to applaud them, when they do well; and to accuse them, when they do wickedly. But the most fair and sagacious inquirer could not, with the utmost diligence, have discovered his obligation to just such particular *positive institutions*; unless the divine being had signified it, by *revelation*.

SERM.

XIV.

II. *Positive duties* are all instrumental, and have the nature of means to an end: but holiness, or *moral virtue* is that end itself.

There are, indeed, some means in-joined us by the light of nature; such as study and attention, prayer and praise; and these may be called *the necessary* or *natural means*. But the *positive institutions* of Christianity are also *means*, well calculated to promote piety, universal, fervent charity, and every *moral virtue*. In holiness, we resemble God, the most perfect and amiable being; and therein consists our highest glory and perfection. But, in the observation of *positive duties*, we bear little or no resemblance to God. *Moral virtue* was good and excellent in itself, antecedent to all positive laws, and therefore in-joined upon us and upon the whole rational world. Whereas *positive institutions* are not good in themselves, but good only as means to holiness, which is the great end of all. And were it not for their subservience to that end,



end, GOD would never have given us any *positive injunctions*. They, therefore, must in consequence be of comparatively lesse value, than the *moral virtues*, which they were designed to promote; as *the means* are, in all cases, of lesse value than *the end*. The weightier matters of the law of *Moses* were not sacrifices, or tithing of mint, annise and cummin; but the great *moral duties*, which are of everlasting obligation, *justice, mercy, fidelity, and the love of GOD*.

Weak and bad men have frequently placed religion in the bare use of *the means*, without a proper care to become holier and better by them. But such a behavior is highly unreasonable in itself, as well as greatly displeasing to almighty GOD. When the wicked Jews offered numerous and costly sacrifices, GOD himself asked them these pungent questions, *Who hath required these things at your hands? Or, ordered such persons, as you are, to tread my courts? And then he adds, Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies,*

SERM. I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the  
 XIV. solemn meeting. Your new-moons and your  
 appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a  
 trouble to me. I am weary with bearing  
 them. And, when you spread forth your  
 hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea,  
 when you make many prayers, I will not  
 hear. The reason of these grievous com-  
 plaints is added, *Your hands are full of  
 blood.*—They were murderers and op-  
 pressors; and therefore all their zeal about  
 rites and ceremonies, and even such *posi-  
 tive institutions* as God had commanded,  
 was disregarded and abhorred of God.  
 But, as the prophet goes on to tell them,  
 if they would reform, then God would  
 yet be gracious and accept them, “*Wash  
 “ you, make you clean, put away the evil  
 “ of your doings from before mine eyes,  
 “ faith the Lord; cease to do evil, learn  
 “ to do well; and then all your sins, of  
 “ how deep a dye soever, will be par-  
 “ doned, and you shall have the divine  
 Isa. lxvi. “ blessing.” The same thing is else-  
 2, 3. where inculcated; *Unto this man* (saith  
 See also Jer. vii. God) *will I look, even to him that is poor  
 22. and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth  
 Micah vi. 6, 7, 8.* at*

at my word. But, as to other men, who disobey my word; *He that killeth a bullock,* with a view to offer it in sacrifice, upon mine altar, is as odious to me, as if he murthered a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.

The reason is added, *Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*

—As the means are, in all cases, of less importance than the end, so are positive institutions of less importance than moral duties; because positive institutions have only the nature of means to an end. Whereas holiness, or moral virtue, is that end itself.

III. *Positive institutions* are of finite, or limited duration; but *moral virtue* (or true holiness) is unchangeable, and will be everlasting. And this is another thing, whereby the superior excellence of the latter may appear.

The



SERM.

XIV.

The positive laws of God have actually been varied, according to the different circumstances in which mankind have been placed. In *paradise*, our first parents were commanded to abstain from the fruit of one tree, in token of their subjection to God, and as an acknowledgement that they held, all they had, by grant from him. But, besides that *positive injunction*, they had also the *moral law*, written upon their hearts, as their general rule of conduct.—After *the fall*, sacrifices seem to have been of divine appointment. For I can hardly think that *righteous Abel* would ever have attempted to please God, by slaying a brute beast and offering it up to him; unless God had, some way or other, intimated his will concerning it. Much less would God have had respect unto *Abel* and to his offering, if he himself had not commanded it. He would rather have testified against it, as *superstition* and *will-worship*.

In about ten generations after *the flood*, men degenerated into *idolatry*, as well as many

many other vices. And God gave a law SERM.  
to *Israel*, which abounded with rites and XIV.  
ceremonies and *positive institutions*; all  
which were highly proper, at that time;  
and appointed of God, with great wisdom,  
to be a standing monument against  
the customs of the surrounding, idolatrous  
nations; to keep the *Israelites* employed  
in the service of the true God; to point  
out, by way of emblem, their obligations  
to *moral purity*; and to lead them to,  
or prepare them for, *Christ Jesus* and his  
religion, which *St. Paul* has called,  
*the end of the law for righteousness* Rom. x.  
*unto every one that believed.* But, when<sup>4</sup>  
the christian revelation was given, as a  
more excellent preservative, in that state  
of the world, against idolatry and vice;  
then the ceremonial law was laid aside,  
*As a yoke upon the necks of the disciples,* Acts xv.  
*which neither their fathers nor they were* 10.  
*able to bear.* Some parts of the *Jewish*  
*law* were very expensive, and others very  
burthensome. Our Savior therefore hath,  
with great wisdom and singular goodnesse  
to us, abolished *the ceremonial law*, and  
hath set up his law, contained in the  
New

SERM. New Testament, of which *the positive in-*  
 XIV. *stitutions* make but a very small part; be-

ing few in number, easy to be understood and observed, not pompous, not expensive or burthensome, no way tending to, or encourageing of, *superstition*; but, if carefully kept to, guarding men against it. — The *positive institutions* of Christianity are these two, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. — By *Baptism*, we are initiated into the church of Christ, being charged with all the obligations, and intitled to all the privileges, of his disciples. The washing with water denotes that purity of mind and life, which is required of every Christian. And, as we have been, in this solemn manner, initiated into that religion, which God, the father of all, sent his son from heaven to publish, and which he sealed and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the spirit, we ought to use the greatest care and diligence to understand the Christian doctrine, and to live accordingly. — *The Lord's Supper* is a memorial of Christ's dying love; designed to perpetuate the remembrance of some important facts,  
 upon



upon which the truth of *Christianity* depends ; and to excite, in our minds, the sincerest love to *Jesus Christ* and to one another, as his members or followers. Hereby we are induced to abound in all the virtues of an holy and good life, and to behave in that exemplary manner, which becomes those, that are duly affected at the remembrance of the astonishing love of *Christ*, in dying for us.

These are the *positive institutions* of pure and uncorrupt Christianity. But, since the first planting of this religion, many errors and corruptions have crept into the Christian church ; and (among other things) the number of rites and ceremonies hath swelled to an amazing degree ; not by the appointment of God ; but by the mere contrivance and invention of weak, or corrupt, men. And the *church of Rome*, more especially, hath rendered them very numerous and burthenfome. But, from what has been said, you may see, that many *positive institutions*, which were of divine appointment, ended together with that dispensation of which they were a part. And the

SERM. the *positive institutions* of *Christianity*, will

XIV. end, at the furthest, with the present  
state of things. For, though *Christianity* be the last dispensation of grace, yet it must give way to the kingdom of glory. Then will all the ordinances of the gospel cease, and the use of the present means be intirely over. But, as *moral virtue*, (or everlasting righteousness) has been the same, in all past ages ; so will it continue to be, in all the ages to come ; and will never cease, or vanish away ; but will accompany us into the unseen world, be found to be the very temper of heaven itself, and will there be our glory and happiness for ever. Like *tongues* and *prophecie*, *faith* and *hope*, must all *positive institutions* vanish. But *charity*, and all the other *moral virtues*, will abide with us, world without end. And, this is another reason, why we should prefer *moral duties* to *positive institutions*. For that, which will abide, hath certainly a greater glory than that which is to vanish away. When the building is completed, the scaffolding is removed, as no longer of any use. And, in every case, where the

the end is fully and completely attained, the means are no longer of any value. It is only, in this state of trial, that such helps are useful; when we come into the happy state of recompence, we shall want such helps and institutions no longer.

IV. Though our obligation to *positive duties* is derived from the will of God; yet they are not in themselves things wholly arbitrary, or indifferent: but were appointed of God, with great wisdom and goodnesse.

The will of God is always according to the reason and fitnessse of things; and he commands nothing merely for commanding sake, or purely to make trial of our obedience. Without such, there are commands enow to imploy our whole time and care; and many and powerful temptations sufficient to try our virtue and obedience. And God, the wise, the gracious governor of all, will never act the part of a tyrant, or arbitrary governor, towards any of his intelligent creatures.



SERM. tures. For, as such arbitrary commands  
 XIV. would be of little or no service, on the  
 one hand : so, on the other hand, they  
 might prove of disservice ; as disobedience to them would increase our guilt, and aggravate our condemnation.

Weak and designing men have been apt to confound *arbitrary* and *positive* injunctions, as if they were intirely the same thing : Whereas they are altogether distinct things, and ought by no means to be confounded. For *arbitrary laws*, there can be no reason assigned ; but the mere will, or humor, of him that appointed them. But, for *positive institutions*, God saw sufficient reason, before he enjoined men to observe them. And, though men could not discover their obligations, nor see the reasonableness of them, antecedent to the divine appointment ; yet, now they are commanded, and the design of them planely laid before us ; we may clearly perceive that they are very far from being *arbitrary*, or unreasonable. They are calculated to excite useful reflections, and lead us to a proper course of action ; which was the  
 wise

wise and gracious design of God, in appointing them. They are as *food*, to nourish our souls in virtue, and true goodnesse; or like *physic*, to heal the diseases of our souls, which are liable to be disordered by the temptations that abound in the world. We are sensible, as well as rational creatures, and what affects the senses commonly attracts our regard, more strongly than the objects of reason, or understanding. It is, therefore fit that, by some sensible representations, our minds be called off, from a too great regard to temporal things; that we may consider what we are, in what relations we stand, how far we are pursuing the end of our creation, and of our being planted for a few years upon earth; whether we are doing our duty, and performing the main businesse, for which we were sent into the world:—that we may rectifie what is amisse, and strengthen those habits which are wise and good.

There are some considerable advantages in God's appointing *positive institutions*, For hereby superstition, and will-worship is prevented, or detected: seeing

Z

their

SERM. their manner is determined, their number

XIV. limited, and the nature and design of

them is clearly described and ascertain-

ed.—It is almost incredible how much

the *Priests of the church of Rome* have

captivated the minds of the people, by

magnificent buildings, splendid vestments,

enchancing music, and numberless rites

and ceremonies of human invention; by

which means, they have carried on their

own covetous and aspiring views; and

raised themselves to immense riches and

great worldly dominion and grandeur.

But the progress of virtue and true piety

has been thereby greatly obstructed; and

ignorance, superstition, idolatry and vice

have been maintained and promoted.

Whereas, in *the gospel*, purity and sim-

licity are altogether consulted. There

the *moral law* is enjoined by divine autho-

rity; and such *positive institutions* added,

as promote men's regard to that law.

For, though, before or without such di-

vine appointment, our reason laid us un-

der no obligation to observe such things;

yet, now they are revealed, they appear to

be



be laws highly worthy both of the wisdom and of the goodnesse of God.

SERM.  
XIV.



V. Though *positive institutions* are not equal to *moral duties*; yet it would be ridiculous, nay wicked, upon that account, to despise or neglect them.

Though tithing mint, annise and cummin was not equal to the weightier matters of the law of *Moses*, *judgment*, *mercy*, *fidelity*, and the *love of God*; yet neither of them were to be omitted. *These things you ought to have done*, (saies our Savior) *and not left the other undone*. Though *sacrifices* were not of equal importance with *mercy*; yet the *Jews* were commanded to offer sacrifice, as well as to shew mercy. When God commands any thing, it no longer remains an indifferent matter, whether men regard it or no. But he is guilty of *immorality*, who, through contempt or neglect, observeth not the *positive institutions*, which God hath graciously appointed, as helps to virtue and piety. For King *Saul's* disobeying a positive precept, the prophet

SERM. *Samuel* reprov'd him, when he declared

XIV. "rebellion [*against God*] to be as odious  
 as the sin of whichcraft, and stubborn-  
 ness to be like injustice and idola-  
 try." There are some, who acknowledge

1 Sam.

xv. 23.

*Baptism* to be a standing ordinance in the Christian church, and yet live and die unbaptized. There are many more professed Christians, who have been baptized, and yet neglect the observation of *the Lord's Supper*; notwithstanding it was Christ's dying command to all his followers, *This do in remembrance of me*. They would do well to consider, whether they pay a due regard to Christ's authority, and how they will answer it to him, when they stand before his tribunal, in the last day; and he shall demand of them, "Why they have not complied with that dying request and injunction of his?" I am afraid, they will be speechless, and confounded, before their judge, at his coming.

Such *divine institutions*, are highly proper, especially at this distance of time and place, to preserve the *Christian* name and religion in the world.—Miracles are

ceased

ceased long ago; but a standing church SERM.  
is instituted, to preserve and maintain the XIV.  
knowledge of Christianity in the world,  
*to edifie the body of Christ*, and to train  
men up, in piety and virtue, for a better  
state.—Now a visible church, without *po-*  
*sitive institutions*, is a mere creature of the  
imagination \*. The observation, therefore, \* See Bp.  
Butler's  
analogy,  
&c.  
of *positive institutions* is necessary to pre-  
serve and continue the Christian name  
and religion in the world. Nor let any  
persons plead “that they have attained  
to an equal measure of holiness, with-  
out the use of such means.” For, as that  
would be false in fact; so would it be, in  
effect, an arraigning the wisdom of God,  
who appointed those means; and a con-  
tradicting the experience of some of the  
best of mankind, who have found great  
benefit from the use of such institutions.  
Whoever would act like a rational crea-  
ture, and a Christian, must neither rest  
in the *means*, as if they were the *end*;  
nor neglect the use of them, because they  
are of less value than the end. The  
right way is *to do the one, and not leave  
the other undone.*



SERM. It is laudable, in you, to keep holy the

XIV. *Lord's day*, to hear the word of God,

and not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of too many is, in our day. But, though you hear never so many sermons, and have the clearest knowlege of divine things; yet, if you rest in the bare hearing the word, and are not doers, as well as hearers, you greatly deceive yourselves, and cannot profit thereby.—You have been devoted unto God, in Christ, by *baptism*, and laid under early and lasting obligations to all that purity, which the Christian religion requires. But what will your baptism profit you; unlesse you renounce the sins of a wicked world, and keep the holy will and commandments of God, as long as you live? You have (several of you) been lately at the table of the Lord, and there eat and drank in memory of Christ's dying love. But what can it avail you, in that solemn manner, to shew forth his death, 'till he return as judge; if you be not constrained, by the love of Christ, to live unto him, who died for you and rose again? You pray

James  
i. 22.

to

to GOD, in the name of Jesus Christ; SERM.  
 [I hope you do so, in your families and XIV.  
 in your closets, as well as in the house of  
 GOD;] but is your temper and practice  
 agreeable? Do you consider that *the* Prov.  
*prayer of the wicked is an abomination to* xv. 8.  
*the Lord, but the prayer of the holy and*  
*upright man is his delight? We know that*  
 GOD beareth not sinners; but, if any man John  
 be a worshiper of GOD, and doeth his will, ix. 31.  
 him he beareth. He, that offereth praise,  
 glorifieth GOD; and unto him, that or-Pf. l. 23.  
 dereth his conversation aright, shall be  
 shown the salvation of the Lord.

But, tho' holiness of heart and life,  
 the love of GOD and our neighbor, the  
 regulation of our passions and appetites,  
 be the great end of religious worship, and  
 therefore preferable to it; yet religious  
 worship is by no means to be neglected.  
 Tho' renouncing the sins of a wicked  
 world and leading an holy life is of much  
 more importance than *baptism*, or wash-  
 ing of the body with water; yet *baptism*  
 is not to be neglected. Tho' spiritual  
 union and communion with Christ, and  
 his disciples, is of much more moment

SERM. than the bare eating bread and drinking  
 XIV. wine, in the *Lord's Supper*; yet every  
 ~~~~~ professed Christian ought, by all means,  
 to attend upon that sacred ordinance, in
 order to promote *moral virtue*, or holi-
 nesse of heart and life. And would to
 God that that dying command of our
 Lord's were more universally observed.

[VI. Lastly.] Tho' *positive institutions*
 ought not, by any means, to be slight-
 ed, but most religiously observed;
 when time and place, and all other
 circumstances will allow us to make
 use of them: yet *moral duties* ought
 always to be preferred, whenever they
 come in competition.

The lesse weighty matters of the law
 ought unquestionably to give place to the
 more weighty; and therefore *mercy* is
 more acceptable unto God than *sacrifice*,
 and obedience to the *moral* precepts of
 more account than whole burnt-offerings.
 Accordingly, our Savior, who was borne
 under the law of *Moses*, and obliged to
 fulfil all righteousness, did frequently
 prefer *moral duties* to *positive*, very com-
 monly

monly choosing to work cures on the sabbath day, and vindicating himself, in not observing the outward rest of that day, by the practice of the Jews in general, who took care of their cattle on that day, and were right in so doing. Thus, when health and all other circumstances will allow, it is your duty to hear the word of God, to keep holy *the Lord's day*, and to attend at the table of the Lord; but, suppose your life or health would be thereby endangered, or some other great evil follow, or some greater good could be done, at that time, which could not be done at any other time; in such a case, God has declared, *he would have mercy rather than sacrifice*, or that he prefers *moral to positive duties*. But, generally speaking, these two kinds of duties do not come in competition. And, in all such cases, *you ought to do the one and not leave the other undone*.

TO CONCLUDE: What I aim at, is, to give every duty of the Christian life its proper weight, and place it in its due order. To lay a different stress upon any part from what God has laid upon it, would be to misrepresent the divine will,
and

SERM. and give an handle to superstitious or pro-

XIV. fane men, to abuse or pervert it. But to

represent means only as means, on the one hand ; and to teach men not to expect to attain the end as well without them, on the other hand ; would be to set Christianity in the most clear, rational and amiable light ; and be the most effectual method of putting the infidels to silence, and of settling the minds of all who are in earnest in their religious inquiries. And I am well persuaded that there is no way, that can equally promote the glorious cause of truth and righteousness, and consequently of the happiness of mankind :—in order to promote which, any good man would desire to live, and some would even dare to die.



S E R M.

S E R M O N XV.



The glorious first of *August* :
Or, The commemoration of the
happy accession of the illustrious
house of *Hanover*, to the throne
of *Great-Britain*.

Preached at *Little St. Helens, London*, 1742.

To the Society, which supports the
morning lecture there.

And published at their request.

I T H E S S. V. 21, 22.

*Prove all things : hold fast that
which is good. Abstain from all
appearance of evil.*



H A T I design from these SERM.
words, is, to vindicate the li- XV.
berty of private judgment,
and that chiefly against the
tyrannical and unjust usurpations of the
church

SERM. *church of Rome*, the most professed and
 XV. notorious enemy of knowlege and liberty.

The text consists of two parts, (1.) That we should *prove*, or examine, *all things*. And (2.) That, when we have examin'd, we should *hold fast that which is good*, and *abstain from all appearance*, or every kind, of evil. The one is as a mean to the other, which is the noblest and best end that can be proposed.

As the divine understanding is infinite, he can have no occasion for inquiry, or examination. And, as he neither hath, nor can have, any possible bias to evil, he always *abstains from every kind of evil*, and *holds fast that which is good*. But, as all truths are not self-evident to us, we must first inquire, "Whether what is proposed to us, be true, or no" ? and then manifest the rectitude of our wills, by rejecting all sorts of evil, and *holding fast that which is good*.

By *all things*, in the text, cannot be understood *vice* as well as *virtue*. No ; *virtue* and *vice* are, in the main branches, so evidently distinct, that we can have no

occa-

occasion to make trial of *vice*. But our SERM.
consciences will determine, without stand- XV.

ing to *examine*, that *vice* is odious and ought to be rejected: and that *virtue* is amiable, and deserves our love and pursuit. And, if we honestly follow the dictates of our own consciences, we shall, without hesitation, refuse the *evil*, and choose and adhere to that which is *good*.

Indeed, many practise, as if they had been enjoined to make trial of *vice*, as well as *virtue*. Like king Solomon, of old, who gave his heart to know, not only *wisdom*, but also madnesse and folly; who pursued whatever his eyes desired, and with-held not his heart from any joy. But the apostle hath, by the connection, taught us to limit the words. For he first saies, *Despise not prophesyings*; and then adds, in our text, *Prove all things*, that is, all prophesyings, every thing that comes under the notion of religious doctrines. *Hold fast that which is good*. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*, or from every kind of evil.

The word, which we translate, *prove*, or examine, seems to be a metaphor tak-

SERM. en from the custom of trying gold, or

XV. silver, in a fornace, or bringing them to

the touch-stone, in order to know whether they are pure or adulterated; that we may reject the baser metal, and retain that which is refined and comes up to the standard. In like manner, we are to bring to trial such opinions, as come recommended to us, under the notion of *religious*, or *divine*; and see whether they are able to stand the test of a severe scrutiny; or appear, upon trial, to be false and counterfeit.

Instead of *free inquiry* and that generous, extensive *liberty*, which both *reason* and *christianity* recommend, the *Church of Rome* is for deciding by *authority*, and enforcing her determinations by the secular arm. Let us, therefore, see whether we ought to be determined by *examination*, or *authority*, in this important affair.

I. This liberty to *prove*, or *examine*, all religious opinions, is the natural right of every man, as he is a reasonable creature; and the great end, for which his under-

understanding was given him. Whereas SERM.
 it is one of the articles in *Pope Pius's* XV.
creed, " I do also receive the holy scrip-
 " tures, in the same sense that holy mo-
 " ther church doeth ; to whom it be-
 " longeth to judge of the true sense and
 " interpretation of them. Neither will I
 " receive, or interpret, them otherwise,
 " than according to the unanimous con-
 " sent of the *fathers*." But, as we pay
 no deference to *that creed*, we hold that
 every man has a right to see with his own
 eyes, and judge with his own understand-
 ing. It is true, different men have diffe-
 rent advantages, both by nature, educa-
 tion, and different circumstances. But,
 as far as men are *reasonable creatures* ; so
 far they are to imploy the understandings,
 which God hath given them ; and every
 man must understand, as well as he can,
 for himself. One man may, indeed, in-
 struct and inform another ; but, after
 that, he must judge for himself, and can-
 not leave it to another to judge and deter-
 mine for him. For, suppose I should
 leave it to another to determine for me,
 and to choose what faith I shall professe,
 and

SERM. and in what manner I shall worship God ;

XV. and he should happen to determine right ;

—it would be no virtue in me, implicitly to follow his determination. For *religion* is of no value any further, than as it is a matter of understanding and choice. But, suppose he should determine wrong ; and I should be thereby led into folly and vice ; that would be yet worse. For he cannot answer for me, in that day, when *every one must bear his own burthen, and every one give an account of himself unto God.* If a man put out his own eyes, that the *Pope* might lead him about, in the best roads, and through the most agreeable places ; it would not be more ridiculous than giving up his understanding to the *Pope*, and blindly receiving all he says for true. And whomsoever any man implicitly follows, he is to him instead of a *Pope*, or infallible guide.

II. This universal liberty, or freedom of inquiry, would be of great benefit to mankind ; as it would help them, in the most effectual manner, to discover error,

ror, and establish truth upon the best foundation. SERM.
XV.

PERHAPS, they, who dissent from the multitude, are in the right, and then it is of moment to the public, that their opinions should prevail. But, if those, that dissent from the commonly received doctrines, or manner of worship, labor under errors; — when they profess their opinions, they may be set right. And every wise and good man will, *in meekness, endeavor to instruct those that oppose themselves*, and so bring them into the ways of truth. But, suppose some can never see so clearly as their neighbors, their weak sight is to be pitied, and they are not to be molested or suffer in the least, in their person, estate, or reputation; provided they do not, by their actions, break the peace, or subvert the rights of civil society. The affairs of *religion* and of *civil government* are, by no means, to be mixed, or confounded. For the affairs of *religion* concern no body, but God and a man's own conscience: whereas civil government concerns all the community.

SERM. TRUTH is able to shift for herself, and
 XV. is an overmatch for error; provided she
 be allowed to speak *freely*, in her own
 defence. And, wherever there is *freedom*
 of debate and inquiry, there will never
 be wanting pious and learned men, who
 will assert and maintain the glorious cause
 of truth, against all error, heresy, im-
 posture and delusion whatever. *Truth* is
 never in more eminent danger, than when
 the liberty of private judgment is under
 restraint. Where authority speaks loud,
 and imperiously determines, without a
 fair debate, there *truth* is forced to retire,
 and is frequently slandered, and stigma-
 tized with the odious names of *danger-*
ous error, damnable heresie, grosse delusion,
 and the like. And men are required to
 keep their eyes close shut; least they
 should examine the decisions of their
 superiors, or ancestors, and see them to
 be nothing but mistakes and delusions;
 and after that, no longer pay a blind sub-
 mission to them. However, the great
 and extensive benefit of the liberty of
 private judgment is very evident from ex-
 perience. For, in every age and nation,
 know-

knowledge generally prevails, in proportion to men's being allowed freely to examine, and profess their own sentiments. SERM. XV.

3. CHRISTIANITY supposes and confirms men's right to *prove*, or examine, *all things*; and every *Christian*, according to his capacity, is obliged to practise this, as his duty.

CHRISTIANITY supposes this right of the liberty of private judgment. Otherwise, how could the gospel have made its way into the world? The nation of the *Jews*, in general, tenaciously adhered to the traditions of their elders, and were zealous for the received opinions; and consequently they were ready to object to our Lord, "That he went off from the sentiments of their wise men and pious fore-fathers; that he contradicted the traditions of the elders; and deluded the poor, ignorant people, by introducing new notions and setting aside their usual glosses and interpretations of scripture." They were ready to say, "Where was this new doc-

SERM. "trine an hundred years ago? Or by

XV. "whom is it now imbraced? By none

~~~~~ "but *the vulgar*, who are the least capable of judging. Our ancestors were men of great piety and uncommon learning: but *whence this man cometh, we know not*. Besides; our scribes and learned men are against him, who must needs be the best judges. For, *have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him? But the common people, who know not the law, are accursed*. They were ready to brand him as a blasphemer of God and an enemy to the civil government; as one that stired up the people, and unhinged weak minds; who saped the foundations of religion, and indangered the welfare of the nation; who put scruples into the heads of the people, and incited them to call in question the *decrees* of their lawful superiors. And, suppose it had been alleged, *that Jesus's morals were good*; they could easily have answered, that he might perhaps be wicked in private, though he was guilty of no public vice; or, if he was pious and virtuous,

" he

John  
vii. 48,  
49.



“ he was likely to do so much the more SERM.  
 “ mischief.” Nay, they did actually XV.  
 carry the matter so far, as to agree to ex-  
 communicate, or put out of their syna-  
 gogues, any one that should dare to pro-  
 fesse their faith in him.

AFTER our Lord ascended, his holy  
 apostles went about, preaching the gospel,  
 where the religion of the *Jews* or *heathens*  
 was established. And their doctrine never  
 could have got footing in the world; if  
 the arguments, which are made use of,  
 against *freedom of inquiry*, had been re-  
 garded as of any weight. For the very  
 design of the apostles was to overthrow  
 several antient opinions, that had as good  
 a claim to *universality* and *antiquity*, as  
 some, which have of late pretended to  
 them. They, therefore, were accused of  
*turning the world upside down*; and, as men,  
 who exceedingly troubled the places,  
 where they came, by teaching doc-  
 trines, and customs, contrary to what were  
 already received. And I do not know of  
 any arguments, that can be alleged against  
*proving*, or examining, *all things*; but  
 what were, or might have been, alleged

SERM. against the apostles attempting to plant  
 XV. Christianity among the *Jews* or *heathens*.

SUPPOSE it should be objected, "Well, but the *apostles* had truth on their side;" — it might readily and justly be answered, So they had; but that was more than their enemies would allow. And who could tell whether they spread truth, or falsehood, till the nature and evidence of their doctrine were examined? It is true, *miracles* would of course rouse men's attention, and were a strong presumption in their favor. But there were other proofs beside *miracles*. And nothing but *free inquiry* could lead men to see the evidence of Christianity, in the whole compass of it.

BUT, beside the gospel's supposing *the liberty of private judgment*, it also greatly confirms it; and contains many clear and expresse passages, where Christians are required to maintain this openness and candor of mind, as most agreeable to the temper and genius of the gospel. *We are*

Matt. vii. (for instance) *to do unto others, as we could*  
 12. *reasonably desire that others, in like cir-*  
*cumstances,*

*cumstances, should do unto us.* Now every man doeth, naturally, and with the highest reason, desire *liberty* for himself, both to profess and act, as things appear to him. And, if he would do, as he desires to be done by, he must allow others to think for themselves, and freely profess their own opinions. For he differs just as much from others, as others differ from him: and they have as much reason to be angry, that he is not of their opinion, as he can have to be angry with others, for differing from him.

SERM.  
XV.

BUT more particularly, When one, that was better disposed, than the body of the Jewish nation, labored under such prejudices, as to ask that question, *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* The answer was, *Come and see*; that is, do not condemn a man and his doctrine without a careful and proper examination.

THE *Jews*, when they saw a cloud arise in the west, expected a shower; and, when the south wind blew, that it would be hot weather: and these things accordingly came to passe. Upon which, *our Savior* said unto them. " You hypocrites,

Luke xii.



SERM. "you can discern the face of the skie and

XV. "of the earth; but how is it that you dis-

cern not these times? *Yea, and why even of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?*" — intimating, that, if they used the same *reason* and *freedom of inquiry*, about him and his religion, which they made use of, about common occurrences, they would plainly discern the truth and evidence of his mission and doctrine.

AGAIN; The *Samaritanes* were of a sect and party very different from the *Jews*, extremely abhorred by them, and bearing great enmity to them. And, as our Savior was of the nation of the *Jews*, and was going up to *Jerusalem*, to worship at the temple there, instead of going up to mount *Gerizim*, to worship with the *Samaritanes*; — a certain village of the *Samaritanes* would not afford him any entertainment. Upon which, two of his disciples were desirous to have had the power of calling for fire down from heaven, to have destroyed that village, as the antient prophet had destroyed some of the idolators in *Israel*. But *Jesus* severely rebuked his disciples, for that intemperate zeal,

zeal, and said, *You know not what manner* SERM.  
*of spirit you are of. For the Son of man* XV.  
*came not to destroy men's lives, but to save* Luke ix.  
*them.* And, having said these things to 51,—56.  
 his disciples, he went away peaceably to  
 another village, to seek for entertainment  
 there.

AGAIN; When *Jesus* was accused, be-  
 fore *Pontius Pilate*, the Roman governor,  
 with opposing the rights of *Cæsar*, and  
 setting himself up for King of the *Jews*;  
 He acknowledged that he was, indeed, a John  
*King*, but his *Kingdom was not of this* xviii. 36.  
*world*, and therefore his servants were not  
 allowed to fight, either to set it up, or  
 defend it.

WHEN the apostles were taken into  
 custody, they asserted their right to op-  
 pose their superiors, both in church and  
 state, as far as spreading of the gospel  
 was looked upon, to be acting in opposi-  
 tion to them. For, when the *Sanhedrim*,  
 the grand council of the *Jewish* nation,  
 forbade them to preach any more in the  
 name of *Jesus*; — they said, “ We leave  
 “ you to judge, *whether it is right to obey*  
 “ *God, or men.* But, however you de-  
 “ *termine,*

SERM. " termine, we are obliged to go on; and

XV. " cannot but speak the things, which we  
 Acts iv. " have heard and seen."

17.—20. THE *Jews* at *Thessalonica* used the apo-  
 stle very ill. But the *Beroeans* inquired  
 into the nature and evidence of the doc-  
 trine, which he preached. Upon which,

Acts  
 xvii. II. the sacred historian observes, *These were*  
*more noble than those of Thessalonica, in*  
*that they — searched the scriptures daily,*  
*to see whether those things were so. And*

the apostles frequently appealed to the  
 reason and consciences of the persons, to  
 whom they wrote, or spoke. *I speak as*

1 Cor. x. *to wise men* (sais St. Paul) *judge you what*

15. *I say.* And again; *Let every man be fully*

Rom.  
 xiv. 5. *persuaded in his own mind.* And he de-

clares, in another place, " That the wea-

2 Cor. x.  
 4. 5. " pons of their warfare were not carnal,

" but spiritual; and yet they were migh-

" ty through God, to the pulling down

" of strong-holds, casting down all *false*

" *reasonings*, and bringing every thought

" in subjection to Jesus Christ." And the

same apostle exhorted the Christians, at

Rom. xii. *Rome*, " to present their bodies, as a liv-

1. " ing sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto

" GOD;



"God; declaring that to be their rea-  
"sonable service."

SERM.

XV.

FROM all which, and more such passages, it plainly appears that the *Christian religion* encourages *universal freedom of inquiry*. And it is an argument in favor of the gospel, that it made its way against all the power, wit, and malice of the world; and increased, for about three hundred years, in the midst of frequent persecution, and before the *Roman Emperors* became *Christians*.

4. THE reformation from Popery was begun and carried on, and can be defended, no otherwise, than by *the liberty of private judgment*, or of *examining all things, in order to the holding fast that which is good*.

THAT was a remarkable contest between reason and authority, between religious liberty and slavery, with which civil liberty, or slavery, is commonly connected. The *reformers* of blessed memory were charged with opposing their lawful superiors in church and state, with pride and vanity and affectation of novelty

SERM. velty and singularity; with going off,  
 XV. from the antient religion of *the holy fa-*  
*thers*, into numberlesse errors and here-  
 fies; and with breaking the peace and  
 unity of the church, by various schisms,  
 sects and parties. They were accused of  
 rejecting that antient and sound doctrine,  
 which had been held by the catholic  
 church, many hundreds of years; of  
 casting off that faith, which had been  
 delivered to the saints; which so many  
 holy and excellent men had imbraced;  
 for which the confessors had indured  
 amazing tortures, and the glorious army  
 of martyrs had laid down their lives;  
 which had been handed down, from age  
 to age, by an uninterrupted succession  
 from the apostles; upon which the church  
 was built, and against which the gates of  
 hell shall not be able to prevail. "What!  
 "were the *Reformers* wiser than all their  
 "fore-fathers? Could no body find out  
 "the truth before the sixteenth century?  
 "Were there no persons of learning and  
 "sincerity, before *Luther*, *Erasmus* and  
 "*Calvin*? Were they so arrogant, as to  
 "think themselves holier, and to have  
 "more

“ more of the spirit of God, than the SERM.  
 “ whole Christian church, for a thousand XV.  
 “ years before? Surely all Christendom  
 “ could never have been so blind, as not  
 “ to have discovered such grosse corrupti-  
 “ ons, if there had been any such. If  
 “ every one be allowed to vent what er-  
 “ roneous notions they please, the church  
 “ must be always in danger; and there  
 “ can be no peace, no discipline, no uni-  
 “ formity; nor any common standard of  
 “ faith, or orthodoxy. The scriptures  
 “ themselves are not plane and expresse  
 “ enough, nor fit for the common peo-  
 “ ple to form their faith by; and all *he-*  
 “ *retics* will pretend, by scripture, to sup-  
 “ port their peculiar errors. We must,  
 “ therefore, have recourse to *fathers* and  
 “ *councils*; or try men by *creeds* and *ar-*  
 “ *ticles of faith*, requiring their assent  
 “ and consent to such common standards;  
 “ or else every man will have a religion  
 “ of his own, and swarms of errors and  
 “ heresies be propagated over the face of  
 “ the earth.”

THESE and the like were the argu-  
 ments, which the *Papists* made use of,  
 against



SERM. against the first *reformers*. And such arguments are levelled against all progress in knowledge and all reformation whatever. However, the *Papists* are consistent with themselves. For they pretend that they have, upon earth, an infallible judge of controversies; and therefore all ought to submit to his decision. But, as to those who disclaim infallibility, and yet pretend to decide by authority; — the inconsistency is too apparent to need many words to point it out. A consistent protestant has no recourse but to *universal liberty* and *freedom of inquiry*. He is for every man's judging for himself, and determining according to evidence.

5. A DISSENT from the church established, in any country, cannot be defended upon any other foundation.

FOR, if authority, either civil, or ecclesiastical, could rightfully set up a standard for the faith and worship of Christians, then none of the subjects have a right to judge for themselves, but are obliged implicitly to submit to what is enjoined upon them. But, if no *Convocation*  
nor

nor *Parliament* can make laws for the church of Christ; or rightfully add to, or take away from, those laws, which Christ himself has already made, and which are contained in the books of the New Testament; — If every man ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind, as to the faith which he professes and the manner in which he worships God; — If religion ought to be a matter of understanding and choice, and *every one must give an account of himself unto God*; — Then every man hath evidently a right to inquire. And if, upon inquiry, he is not satisfied, either with the established articles of faith, or manner of worship; He hath a right to think for himself, to profess a different faith, and to worship God in a different manner. Every man's guide, in matters of religion, ought to be the conviction of his own conscience, after a faithful examination. And he can no more be determined by the conscience, or understanding, of another, than he can see with another man's eyes, or hear with another's man's ears.

SERM. 6. *Lastly.* THE setting up of *authority*,  
 XV. in matters of *religion*, and discouraging  
 the *liberty of private judgment*, hath been  
 attended with many very bad conse-  
 quences.

UNJUST censures and reproaches are one degree of persecution. But, when the persecutors and tyrants of the earth have had power, they have seldom or never stoped there. But, from wrath and clamor and incensing the multitude, have proceeded to pulling down of houses, confiscation of goods, banishment, imprisonment, racks and tortures, fire and faggot. — There are many and strong arguments against *Popery*. But there is not one that is more flagrant, or that leaves more deep and lasting impressions on men's minds, than to read the *book of martyrs*, or the *history of the horrible and tremendous court of inquisition*. What an idea does it give one of *that church and religion*, to read the story of the *Paris* and *Irish* massacres; the burning the martyrs here in *England*, especially in the days of bloody *Queen Mary*; the horrid and shocking design of the *powder plot*; and other specimens



cimens of the fraud, treachery and inhu- SERM.  
mane cruelty of the *church of Rome*; XV.  
which may be met with, in great abun-  
dance ?

CHRISTIANITY is in itself a most rational and benevolent religion, and was at first planted in the world by the most wise and righteous methods. Without the help or countenance of the civil magistrate, it spread with an amazing swiftnesse, not only through the *Roman empire*, but into the more remote parts of the earth. Notwithstanding the great opposition it, almost every where, met with, it became victorious and greatly triumphed, by the force of his own innate excellence, and by those external evidences which attended the first planting of it. For about three hundred years, the *Christian religion* lived and flourished under great discouragements, and no lesse than ten fierce and bloody persecutions. After the *Roman empire* became Christian, it was greatly corrupted ; till at last the empire fell, and made way for the dominion and grandeur of the *Bishops of Rome* ; under whom the *Apostasy* arose to an astonishing height,

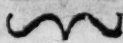
SERM. and *true Christianity* lay buried, and almost  
 XV. most lost, under the rubish of *Popery*,  
 and that for several ages.

It is not much above two hundred years from the commencement of the *reformation*, which was, at the instigation of the *Pope*, very vigorously opposed by the emperor, *Charles the V<sup>th</sup>*. In the year 1529, He summoned a diet at *Spire*; where a decree was carried, by the majority of princes and states then assembled, to check the progresse of the *reformation*, and terrifie those who should dare to support, or favor it. Against that decree, a solemn *protest* was entered, *by six Princes and fourteen free cities*. From that *protest*, came the name *Protestant*. And it is very remarkable that, of the six princes, who then protested, there were three, who were the ancestors of the present royal family. For, of the predecessors of the illustrious house of *Hanover*, there was *Duke Ernest*, from whom *his Majesty* is the sixth in descent, in a direct line. And *Duke Francis*, brother to *Duke Ernest*. There was also the *Elect<sup>r</sup> of Saxony*, who was then at the head of the  
*Pro-*

*Protestant* interest; and from him descended the *Dukes of Sax-Gotha*, in the *Ernestine line*, — from whom came her royal highness, the *Princessess of Wales*. They were some of the most early favorers and patrons of the *Reformation*. And these families have continued *Protestants* from age to age, ever since, without interruption. — But other princes and states have been favorers of *Papery*. And the struggles to introduce it again, into this happy island, have been so many and so great, that the supreme power hath been, twice since the *reformation*, lodged in the hands of bigoted *Papists*. Bloody queen *Mary* went so far as to persecute, and even burn at the stake, great numbers of holy and excellent persons, who could not renounce faith and a good conscience, nor turn about with every wind of doctrine; and who loved not their lives unto the death, that they might approve themselves unto God. King *James* the II<sup>d</sup> was hastening on the same measures; but was, under Almighty God, most happily disappointed, by the hand of that great hero, the illustrious *Prince*

SERM.

XV.





SERM. of Orange, who was afterwards King

XV. *William of immortal Memory.* And, from that signal *revolution*, and no further back, can we date the *liberty of England*, both civil and religious. The next successor to the throne began her reign in so glorious a manner ; and had, for several years, such a series of victories and successes against the *grand* invader of the liberties of *Europe*, that I wish I could throw a veil over what followed. But it is too well known to be concealed, that she was, by the instigation of evil counsellors, upon the brink of yielding up, at once, all that had been obtained, with so much blood and treasure. Our *toleration* was broke in upon, our *Liberty* lay wounded and gasping at the feet of the *Queen* ; and she was just lifting up her arm, to give it the last and fatal wound : when, on that very day, that the iniquitous act was to take place, *God* appeared for us, in the most remarkable and distinguishing manner ; took away that *Princesse*, who had been so far seduced, as to seek our ruine ; and introduced, as *King William's Legacy*, the illustrious house of *Hanover*.—O that  
glo-

glorious first of August ! that signal day, SERM.  
 which ought never to be forgotten ! When XV.  
 God, thus suddenly and surprizingly, turned <sup>Ps. cxxi.</sup>  
 again the captivity of our Zion, we were <sup>1, &c.</sup>  
 like men that dream. The happineſſe  
 ſeemed too great, and unexpected, to be  
 any more than a *pleaſing dream*. Then  
 were our mouths filled with laughter,  
 and our tongues with ſinging. Then  
 ſaid they among our enemies, *The Lord*  
*hath done great things for them !* The  
 Lord did, indeed, very great things for  
 us, whereof we were exceding glad. —  
 May this family, in their ſucceſſive gene-  
 rations, inherit the throne, as long as the  
 ſun and moon indure ! May they be al-  
 ways ſteddy patrons of our liberties ; ſup-  
 porting and defending us in thoſe we al-  
 ready enjoy ; and, likewise, remove every  
 remaining yoke ! May they evermore be  
 a glory to the *Proteſtant* and *Chriſtian*  
 name ; bleſſings to the nation ; and friends  
 to mankind ; and may all the people ſay,  
*Amen !*

From this ſhort hiſtory of the late eſta-  
 bliſhment of *our liberty*, and of the emi-  
 nent danger, in which it has ſince been,

SERM. it is easy to account for the little progreſſe,  
 XV. which the ſtudy of the *ſcriptures* had, in  
 former ages, comparatively made ; and  
 to conclude, that that moſt important  
 ſtudy is yet capable of greater advances.  
 For, ſince the light of the goſpel came  
 into this iſland, *Popery* obſcured it till the  
*reformation*. From the *Reformation* down  
 to the *Revolution*, there was almoſt one  
 continued ſtruggle, to bring in *Popery* and  
 arbitrary power. And it was not ſafe for  
 any man freely to inquire, and openly  
 profeſſe his own ſentiments. Since,  
 therefore, *Liberty* has not had the aſcen-  
 dent, much above half an age ; it is not  
 to be wondered if, upon *free inquiry*, and  
 faithful, laborious examination, ſome  
 things ſhould be ſet in a better light,  
 which were miſtaken, or miſrepreſented,  
 in the ages of darkneſſe and tyranny.

We ought to guard againſt every de-  
 gree of a perſecuting and uncharitable  
 ſpirit. And, above all, againſt the re-  
 turn of *Popery*, the grand patroneſſe of  
 impoſition and uncharitableneſſe.—Some,  
 indeed, would now pretend that *Popery*  
 is not that cruel and perſecuting religion,  
 which



which it formerly was ; but, from a SERM.  
 fierce and rampant lion, is become like a XV.  
 meek and harmlesse lamb. But, is not  
 the *inquisition* still in *Spain*, *Portugal*,  
 and other places ? And have they not  
 made it evident, in other countries, and  
 that by instances, not many years ago,  
 that their principles and their practices  
 are the same as formerly ? And, indeed,  
*cruelty* must of course be the support of  
 any religion, that has its foundation, not  
 in truth and evidence, but in external  
 force and authority.

When I have considered the seas of  
 blood, which have been shed ; and the  
 many myriads that have lost their lives,  
 upon the account of *religion*, I have been  
 ready to say, “ Can *religion* lead men to  
 “ cruelty, or inspire them to do such  
 “ barbarous things ? Can *men*, who are  
 “ themselves so liable to err, persecute  
 “ *men*, with so fierce and unrelenting a  
 “ rigor ? And, what is more, Can *Chri-*  
 “ *stians*, whose religion breathes nothing  
 “ but love and charity, persecute *Chri-*  
 “ *stians*, who are members of the same  
 “ family and disciples of one common

SERM. "Lord?" But, though one would not

XV. expect such a conduct; yet certain expe-

rience and undoubted matter of fact confute all arguments to the contrary; and plainly direct us where to find a tyrannical power, which answers to the prophetic description, and that hath often

Rev.  
xvii. 6.

*been drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus:—A thing, which when St. John saw in vision only, he wondered with great admiration.*

Thus it hath been for many ages, and thus in many places it still continues to be, to the great hindrance of the spreading of the true and pure *religion of Christ*. For, as long as the lords and rulers of the earth will enforce *religion by their authority*, absurdity must prevail from age to age. And it is but little that the friends of liberty can do, especially in *Mahometan* and *Popish* countries. However, nothing should discourage them from making their best efforts. And we are obliged to stand up for our liberties, as *men*, or reasonable creatures; as *Christians*, and as *Protestants*. Let us ever cherish in ourselves a love of truth and an opennesse  
and

and candor of mind ; and be diligent in SERM.  
examining what we believe, and why. XV.

And let us likewise, incourage the spirit  
of liberty and free inquiry in others.  
This is the only effectual way to detect  
error, and to promote truth and know-  
lege. This is the best way to put the  
infidels to silence. For, when the nature  
of Christianity is clearly explained, and  
its evidences set in the strongest point of  
light ; when there is a proper distinction  
made between *Christianity* itself, as it lies  
in the scriptures, and the *systems* and *in-*  
*ventions of men* ; then the enemies of re-  
velation will have nothing material to ob-  
ject. The truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, will  
gain ground. *The Bible* will be the only stand-  
ard among Christians ; and they will bear  
with one another, in examining and inter-  
preting it, as well as they can. It will then  
appear that *the wrath of man cannot work the* James i.  
*righteousnesse of God. That the wisdom* 20. & iii.  
*from beneath is earthly, sensual and devi-* 15,—18.  
*lish. But that the wisdom from above is*  
*first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy*  
*to be persuaded, full of mercy and good*  
*fruits, without partiality and without hy-*  
*pocrisy.*



SERM. *pocrify.* And, *that the fruit of righteousness*

XV. *ness is sown in peace, of them that love and practise peace.* Then will the glorious

prophecy be fulfilled, in its true and ge-

nuine signification, " The wolf shall

" dwell with the lamb, and the leopard

" shall lie down with the kid ; and the

" calf and the young lion and the fatling

" shall herd together, and a little child

" shall lead them. And the cow and

" the bear shall feed *in the same place* ;

" their young ones shall lie down toge-

" ther. And the lion shall eat straw like

" the ox. And the sucking child shall

" *safely* play upon the hole of the asp ;

" and the weaned child *may securely* put

" his hand upon the cockatrice's den.

" They shall not hurt, nor destroy, in

" in all my holy mountain. For the

" earth shall be full of the knowlege of

" the Lord, as the waters overspread the

" channels of the seas." When this

kind and benevolent, this truly christian

spirit gains the ascendent, *Religion* will

not only lift up her head, but rear up all

her heavenly form, and appear to the

world in her native simplicity and attrac-

tive

tive charms. She will then sweeten men's tempers and reform their lives ; promote in them, as things of the last importance, a superlative, filial love of God ; and a brotherly affection to all mankind ; a due regulation of their own passions and appetites ; and the dominion and authority of *conscience*, as the governing faculty in man ; — teaching them, in this manner, to carry on the habits of goodnesse, till they grow up to a meetnesse for the world of love and purity, where peace, liberty and truth are happily united, and will reign triumphant world without end.

SERM.

XV.



*Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty, where- Gal. v. 1.*  
*with Christ hath made you free ; and do not*  
*submit your necks to any yoke of bondage*  
*whatever. And think it not sufficient to*  
*assert your right to prove, or examine,*  
*all things. But diligently examine ; and,*  
*when you have examined, be very care-*  
*ful, and even sollicitous to hold fast that*  
*which is good, and abstain from all appear-*  
*ance, or every kind, of evil. This is the*  
*great end of all inquiry and examination,*  
*and without it, all our inquiry signifies*  
*nothing. To find out what is right, and*  
 choose

SERM. choose and pursue what is wrong, is the

XV. height of folly and wickedness. And we ought to be, at least, as careful *to hold fast that which is good, and to abstain from every kind of evil*, as to stand up for the liberty of private judgment, and assert our right to examine all religious doctrines, and to choose or refuse, as we see proper. To grow indolent about religion, and unconcerned about retaining truth and practicing righteousness, after we have struggled for our liberty, and either examined, or been allowed to examine, would be to be zealous about *the means*, and indifferent about *the end*, which is of much greater importance than all the means. What can it signify for any man to stand up for religious liberty, in order to his embracing licentious principles, or indulging himself in vicious practices? Or what can it avail any man to contend for the liberty of worshiping God in his own way; and, after he has got that liberty, to forsake the public assemblies, and leave off worshiping God in any way at all? It damps the zeal of such as are the faithful friends of liberty, to see how  
many



many turn their *liberty* into *licentiousness*, and abuse the noblest principles by the most infamous practices. If such persons could be argued with, one would exhort them to be serious, and not to think that a laugh, or a jest, contains any argument in it. Let them not pretend a liberty to think and act as they please. Such a liberty they unquestionably have, in opposition to all human power and authority; provided they do not break the peace, or subvert the rights, of civil society; — but not in opposition to truth and right, or as if they were not accountable. There is a God, before whose righteous tribunal they must stand. And, if they have rejected truth, or refused to practise what he has enjoined, they must expect to answer for it, in that great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and God will render unto every man according as his works have been. It would give one great pleasure to see them act so, as that they may find mercy with their judge in that day. In the mean time, Let not the *infidel* and the *libertine* assume the glorious name of *free-thinkers*, as long

SERM.  
XV.

SERM. as they give such indications of being the  
 XV. most slavish thinkers and the greatest bi-  
 ~~~~~ gots, — of being afraid of truth, devoted  
 to a party, and thinking altogether on one
 side. For what else can one suppose of
 those, who catch greedily at every thing
 which (they imagine) can depretiate
christianity; and never allow any thing to
 be rational or good, that is alleged in its
 defence?

The minute philosopher and the *half-thinker*, who has, perhaps, found some mistakes, in the principles, in which he was educated; or who has, in conversation, heard *Christianity* ridiculed and insulted; immediately, and without further examination; sets up for a professed enemy to *revelation*; forsakes the public worship of Almighty God; turns apostle and preacher of infidelity; and endeavors to make converts, and unhinge the minds of the young and gay, the ignorant and thoughtless: — and all this merely for want of complying with this rational and apostolic rule, *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from every kind of evil.*

This

This is a great, and (as some say) a SERM.
growing evil ; but it is evidently a most XV.
notorious abuse of *liberty* ; and gives so
much offence to many serious and well-
disposed persons, that they are ready to
entertain an ill opinion of *liberty* itself.
And it weakens the hands and grieves the
hearts of such as are the faithful friends
of liberty, truth and righteoufnesse ; when
(on the one hand) they see such a glori-
ous cause deserted, by those, who ought
to be its stedfast friends ; and themselves
censured (on the other hand) by the pa-
trons of bigotry and persecution, as per-
sons of bad principles and that carry on
the worst designs.

But I hope better things of you, before
whom I now speak, and that you will
always most carefully distinguish between
Liberty and *Licentiousnesse* ; that you will
attend upon the worship of God in pub-
lic, and be thankful for the liberty of so
doing ; that you will not neglect the
Lord's supper, nor fail to keep up the
worship of God stately, both in your
families and in your closets ; and that you
will make use of the *liberty*, you enjoy,
to

SERM. to the best and noblest purposes, *that is,*

XV. in order to understand your religion, and

the evidences of it, better ; — that your faith in Christ Jesus may be *a reasonable service*. And that, as your knowlege in-

creases, and your faith is confirmed, you

will proportionably abound in extensive

piety and righteoufnesse ; that you will

indeavor to adorn the *Christian* and the

Protestant religion by holy and exemplary

lives ; and excel the members of the

church of *Rome*, as much in your prac-

tice, as you do in your principles. For,

Gal. v. — *Brethren, you have been called unto li-*
 13. *berthy ; only use not your liberty for an occa-*
sion to the flesh, but in love serve one ano-
ther.





S E R M O N XVI.

Objections against days of fasting
and prayer stated, and answered,

Occasioned by the war with *France* and
Spain, preached at *Crouched-Friars*,
London, Jan. 9, 1744-5. Being the
Day appointed by His Majesty, for a
Public Fast.

Published at the request of the hearers.

ISAIAH lviii. 6, 7.

*Is not this the fast that I have cho-
sen ? to loose the bands of wick-
ednesse, to undo the heavy bur-
thens, and to let the oppressed
go free, and that you break
every yoke ?*

C c

Is

Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor, that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

SERM.
XVI.

2 Chron.
XX. 1.



WE find that, when the children of *Moab*, *Ammon*, and others, came against *Jehoshaphat*, to battle; he was afraid, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all *Judah*. And *Judah* gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord; even out of all the cities of *Judah* they came [to *Jerusalem*] to seek the Lord. — And, in the following part of the same chapter, it appears that their fasting and praying were acceptable unto God; that he heard their prayers, and granted them victory over their enemies.

AGAIN;

AGAIN ; it is recorded, that the Lord SERM.
 said unto *Jeremiah*, " Take a book, and XVI.
 " write therein all the words, that I have Jeremiah
 " spoken, against *Israel* and against *Ju-* xxxvi. 1,
 " *dah*, and against all the nations ; from &c.
 " the day I [*first*] spake unto thee, even
 " unto this day. It may be, that the
 " house of *Judah* will hear all the evil,
 " which I purpose to do unto them ;
 " that they may turn, every man, from
 " his evil way, that I may forgive their
 " iniquity and their sin." Then *Jere-*
miab (being in prison) said unto *Baruch*,
 " I cannot go into the house of the
 " Lord. Therefore go thou, and read
 " in the roll, which thou hast written
 " from my mouth, the words of the
 " Lord, in the ears of the people, in the
 " Lord's house, upon the fasting day ;
 " and also thou shalt read them, in the
 " ears of all *Judah*, that come out of
 " their cities. It may be, they will
 " present their supplication before the
 " Lord ; and will turn, every one, from
 " his evil way. For great is the anger
 " and the fury that the Lord hath pro-
 " nounced against this people."

SERM. *Baruch* read what *Jeremiah* had writ,

XVI. and King *Jehoiakim* took it and threw it into the fire; and sought to apprehend both *Baruch* and the *prophet*. He and his people despised the admonition, and accordingly fell into the hands of their enemies, and suffered in a remarkable manner. — I am not going to run a parallel, in all these particulars, between the case of the *Jews*, in antient times, and the present state of our nation. But would have you observe, from the two cases that have been mentioned, from this whole chapter where the text is, and from the reason and nature of things, that, when *fasting* and *prayer* promote *moral virtue*, or holiness of heart and life, they then render us acceptable to God. And, in that way alone, can men reasonably hope for the divine blessing.

Though these things appear so evident; yet some persons seem to doubt, as to the necessity, or expedience, of complying with the calls of our civil Governors, to those religious exercises of *fasting* and *prayer*. It may be proper and of some service,

service, therefore, to take notice of their objections. SERM.
XVI.

(1.) It is said, " that *Religion* is not a
" civil affair ; and therefore our *legisla-*
" *tors* have no right to appoint either
" *feasts* or *fasts*. *Jesus Christ* is sole law-
" giver in his church. And, if he had
" appointed such a thing, his disciples
" ought to have obeyed. But, as he
" hath not, no power upon earth hath
" a right to make laws, that shall be
" binding upon the consciences of *Chris-*
" *tians*."

To which it may be answered that, in the affairs of *religion* and *conscience*, we ought to acknowlege no *human authority*. But, if things be right and reasonable in themselves, the disciples of *Jesus* may and ought to observe them. If any thing was enjoined, by the civil magistrate, that broke in upon the rights of conscience, or tended to infringe *that liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free*, it is our duty not to comply ; but bravely to bear our testimony against it, at the hazard of all we have in the world, and even of life itself. But, when our supe-

SERMONS recommend that, which we may

XVI.

observe in our own way ; and against which, upon other accounts, we have no material objection ; it would be obstinacy and affected singularity not to comply with such a proposal. And we must needs think ourselves concerned in the public welfare, as much as our neighbors and the rest of the nation.

OBJ. II. " Some may say, that all " warlike preparations are highly proper ; " but what can other things signifie ? "

To this it may be justly answered, that an over-ruling providence ought to be acknowledged and taken into the account ; otherwise all our preparations can avail nothing. *The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Many strange revolutions have happened in *Europe*, within these few years past ; and who can tell what shall be the situation of things, a few years hence ? The proudest and most aspiring monarch may be humbled, and the lowly exalted. *The power and the might and the battle and the victory are the Lord's, and he giveth them to whomsoever he pleaseth.* The whole crea-
tion

tion is in his hand, and every thing in it SERM.
intirely at his disposal. He commandeth XVI.
the winds and the waves ; raiseth tem-
pests, and stilleth the raging sea, as well
as the tumult of the nations. He can
easily prosper the attempts of the weak,
and baffle the counsels of the deepest po-
liticians, and the strength of the largest
armies. He can secure our navy from
storms and tempests, and give successe in
the day of battle. He can send discord
into the cabinet, the camp, or the fleet
of our enemies, and make our hands
strong, and our hearts couragious. ' It is,
therefore, highly fit and meet to ac-
knowlege him, *whose kingdom ruleth over*
all.

OBJ. III. " Some have particularly ob-
" jected against *fasting*, as a thing, that
" can neither be acceptable unto God,
" nor of any benefit to mankind."

As to which, it hath been very justly
observed, that the prayers of good men are
not lesse acceptable to God, after they
have taken their necessary food, than
when they are fasting. But, in the first
place, by fasting, all abuse of meats and

SERM. drinks, and all excesses, are prevented ;

XVI. which is highly proper, when men approach God in solemn acts of worship : and more especially fit for those who fare sumptuously every day ; which is the case of many, in and about *this great city*.

In the next place, the people are, by this mean, made more attentive to what they are about, and the more incited to mind their duty. And *fasting* has the same effect upon them, with other bodily services, such as standing or kneeling, the *Jews* praying towards the temple, and the like ; — all which things move and affect mankind much more, than if they were to perform divine worship, merely within their own minds ; tho' it is the mind alone, which God regards. — AGAIN ; the devotion, and consequently the repentance and holiness of some persons, is promoted by abstinence or fasting ; and such persons ought to take this method, because it is an help and advantage to them. But, as all the means of virtue ought to be esteemed, in an exact proportion to their promoting the great end,

end, viz. *right temper and life* ; they, SERM.
XVI.
who find total abstinence, on such a day, to hinder their devotion, instead of helping it, ought only to lessen the usual quantity of their food ; and, in that way, humble themselves before the Lord. But to indulge to excess, or even to that plenty, which might be proper on another occasion, after a few hours abstinence and attendance on public worship, is a very odd way of fasting, and manifests a great degree of indifference towards repentance and humiliation.

As to several parts of christian behavior and worship, we are left to the reason of things, and the guidance of our own understandings. In the New Testament we are no where commanded to fast. But we have the example of the apostles and other christians, who joined fasting with prayer ; and are not therefore censured, but spoken of with approbation. And our Savior has given us rules how to behave, when we are disposed to observe a fast in private ; i. e. not to make a show and ostentation of it to the world ; but to appear among men, as at other times ;

SERM. times ; and let it be a transaction between

XVI. God and our own souls. However, fasting, as a religious exercise, is of no value, any further than it promotes holiness of heart and life. This appears both from the reason of the thing, and from the clear and affectionate account of this matter, in the chapter where the text is ; — in which God orders the prophet to declare aloud, that their external performances, their fasting and praying signified nothing, as long as they thereby sought only the praise of men, and the character of being very religious, without repentance and personal virtue,

Mat. vi. As that was the reward they sought, that
2; 5; 16. was all the reward they were to have.

* Vid.
Cleric.
in loc.

The meaning of ver. 4. seems to be different from what is represented in our translation, viz. * “ You shall [i. e. *you ought to*] fast for strife and debate ; or “ that you may cease from strife and debate, and from smiting with the fist of “ wickedness.” Ver. 5. &c. a loud voice in prayer or lamentation, an afflicting the soul, hanging down the head, wearing sackcloth, lying down upon the ground

ground in dust and ashes ; — all these SERM.
were actually practised by the Jews ; but XVI.
signified nothing, without the practice of
justice and charity, which they were de-
signed to promote. But, if they would
have fasted and prayed, with a view to
to become better men ; then, amidst all
their dark and threatening appearances,
their light would have broke forth like
the morning ; their righteousness would
have led the van, and gone in the front
of the army, and protected them from all
evil ; and the glory of the Lord would
have brought up the rear ; so that, being
defended behind and before, no enemy
would have been able to hurt them.
And, in other lofty and figurative expres-
sions, the prophet intimates the settled
peace, plenty and tranquillity, which
would have followed upon their becom-
ing sincerely pious and virtuous.

And, if we fast with a view to hum-
ble ourselves before God for our own sins,
to mortify pride, vanity, or any other
vice or folly ; to be more liberal to the
poor and needy ; and to be more strict
in the observation of every divine pre-
cept ;

SERM. cept ; how can such a fast be reckoned
 XVI. superstitious or ridiculous ? or what is
 there unreasonable or unbecoming therein?

OBJ. IV. “ As some have objected a-
 “ gainst *fasting*, so others have objected
 “ against *prayer*. They allege that all
 “ things go on in one stated course, just
 “ as they were fixed in creation : that
 “ good men and bad are alike involved in
 “ famine and pestilence, in storms and
 “ shipwrecks, in wars and invasions :
 “ that *christian* nations have no more
 “ peace than the *Jews* of old, or than
 “ the *Heathens* and *Mahometans* have now
 “ a days : that *Protestants* are as much
 “ exposed as *Papists* ; and good princes
 “ and virtuous nations, as the tyrants and
 “ oppressors of mankind ; or the nations,
 “ who choose slavery, and abound in all
 “ manner of ignorance and wickedness ;
 “ — that, therefore, it is a vain thing to
 “ pray unto God, and to humble our-
 “ selves before him. Our prayers cannot
 “ move the almighty, nor our days of
 “ fasting and humiliation have any effect
 “ upon his councils or actions. Tho’,
 “ therefore, all warlike preparations are
 “ highly

“ highly wise and reasonable ; yet pray- SERM.
“ ing, with a view to conquer our ene- XVI.
“ mies, is a mere idle notion, fit only
“ for Priests to defend, whose businesse
“ it is to amuse and inflave the minds of
“ men ; and fit for none but the giddy,
“ thoughtlesse multitude to attend to,
“ and observe. They, indeed, know no
“ better. They look upon God, as a
“ King or great man, who sits upon a
“ throne in heaven, and looks down upon
“ all the children of men ; who is moved
“ by the importunity of those who ear-
“ nestly cry unto him for help, and who
“ may be perswaded into other measures
“ than those he had designed to persue.
“ Whereas mortal men can neither in-
“ form nor move the almighty. If he
“ knows that peace is proper for us, he
“ is infinite in wisdom and power, and
“ abundant in goodnesse, and he will
“ grant us an honorable and lasting
“ peace and tranquillity. But, if he is
“ determined to visit us with war or in-
“ vasion ; if he will suffer our trade to
“ be interrupted, or to go into other
“ channels, and visit other climates ; so
“ he

SERM. " he will do ; and it is not our using

XVI. " prayers or intreaties, that can stop the

" hand of heaven, or have any effect up-

" on the almighty. For he is of one

" mind, and who can turn him ? and

" whatsoever his soul desireth, that he

" doeth ; for he will accomplish all his

" pleasure."

Now as to this, and all objections of the like nature, it may justly be granted that we cannot inform God of any thing, as if he was, before that, ignorant ; and, after our mentioning it to him, he was then perfectly acquainted with it. For God knows all things, of himself, before we mention them ; and that much more perfectly than we can describe them, or even know them. Neither can our prayers have any influence upon God ; unlesse they first have a proper influence upon us, to render us truly penitent for our sins, thankful for our mercies, and careful for the future to know and do the good and holy and acceptable will of God.

God, the wise and universal creator, hath so settled the plan of providence, that
virtue

virtue leads to happiness, and vice to misery. Now prayer is a mean to virtue, and as such is itself a virtue, which ought carefully and conscientiously to be practised. SERM. XVI.

The Jews, indeed, were under a Theocracy, and frequently had extraordinary and miraculous interpositions in their favor, when they kept free from idolatry, and the vices which it drew after it. Now such miraculous interpositions we are not to expect. But it is true, in all instances, that righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is the reproach, and threatens the ruine, of any people. And, under the New Testament, godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.

It is true, future and eternal rewards, in another world, are the great things, which christians are principally to regard. But it is also to be remembered, that the constitution of this world is wise; and that virtue tends to prosperity, and vice to misery, even in the present state. Thus the plan of creation must appear to every thinking person to be truly rational
and

SERM. and noble. — AGAIN ; God hath not
XVI. hindered himself, by the plan of creation,
from interposing in an extraordinary manner, in some particular and remarkable circumstances. Nay, wherever it is wise and proper to interpose, we may depend upon it, that God was always determined to do so, and will actually do it. — But, in cases, to which the plan of creation reaches not, and in which the divine interposure would not be wise and proper ; there we are to consider the grand scheme of providence as reaching forward into an everlasting state and world ; where (not whole nations indeed, but) all righteous and penitent persons, of every kindred and nation, shall be made perfectly and for-ever happy ; and the wicked of all nations punished according to their deserts. — As therefore *prayer* evidently promotes righteousness ; and, in consequence of that, renders us meet objects of the divine favor and blessing ; so far it cannot justly be objected against, or be deemed a vain and fruitless thing. On the contrary, it must inspire a people with zeal and bravery, firmly to believe that
that

that their cause is right in the sight of SERM.
God ; and that, in a just cause, carried XVI.
on by lawful methods, they may depend
upon the divine blessing.

OBJ. V. AND LAST. “ It may again
“ be objected, that, when days of fast-
“ ing and humiliation are observed, there
“ is little or no reformation of the vicious
“ effected thereby. Every one is ready
“ to complain of the wickedness of
“ others ; and will, without scruple or
“ hesitation, confesse the sins of the na-
“ tion in general, or of men of such and
“ such ranks and stations, or of different
“ sects and parties in matters of religion.
“ *For instance,* great men and governors
“ will readily complain of the idleness
“ and vice of the lower part of mankind ;
“ that they are factious and seditious ;
“ giddy and unmanageable, prone to
“ change, though it be for the worse ;
“ never long easy with any governor, or
“ any form of government ; but fond of
“ revolutions, though they end in ruine
“ and slavery.

“ The people, on the other hand, will
“ readily acknowledge that (though the

SERM. " king can do no wrong ; yet) some

XVI.

" persons in power have been too
 " covetous and aspiring ; that they have
 " been for burthening the people with
 " many and heavy taxes ; as if the art
 " of government chiefly consisted in a
 " skill to raise the revenues to the greatest
 " height ; that they have been for carry-
 " ing the royal prerogative too great a
 " length ; and for bearing hard upon the
 " trading world, and such as have stood
 " up for the liberties of the nation ; that
 " they scarce have scrupled any methods
 " to bring the people into a slavish sub-
 " jection and dependence ; or at least
 " have not duly consulted the ease and li-
 " berties and welfare of the nation.

" *The city* will freely and warmly in-
 " veigh against *the court* ; and represent
 " it as a place that effeminates the minds
 " of men, and greatly indangers their
 " virtue ; that some of our nobility and
 " gentry have departed from that honest
 " bravery and true *English* spirit, for
 " which their ancestors were so much
 " renowned ; and have affected the man-
 " ners and followed the fashions of some
 " of

“ of our greatest enemies, and of the SERM.
“ most soppish, voluptuous and effemi- XVI.
“ nate courts and nations; — that they
“ have spent high, and paid their honest
“ tradesmen and dependents but very in-
“ differently: that they have run out
“ great estates, by being above looking
“ into their own accounts; till they have
“ become dependent on the crown, and
“ obliged to fall into all its measures, to
“ keep up that external show of gran-
“ deur, which they have thought neces-
“ sary to persons of their quality; that
“ they have been insatiably fond of plea-
“ sures and diversions, and have led the
“ nation into that false and destructive
“ taste; that they have been much ad-
“ dicted to gaming and debauchery, and
“ extravagancies of various kinds; that,
“ in public affairs, they have been exces-
“ sively guilty of bribery and corruption;
“ till, by their example and influence,
“ that leaven hath spread through the
“ nation; and there are few votes to be
“ had, places of profit and preferment
“ to be obtained, or public affairs to be
“ transacted, without it. *The court, in*

SERM. " return, will readily condemn *the city*;

XVI. "

" and allege that the citizens grow too
 " rich and insolent, full of pride, covet-
 " ousness, luxury, fraud and oppres-
 " sion; that, as, by their large and ex-
 " tensive trade, they have such an abun-
 " dance of wealth flowing in upon them,
 " they grow vain and ambitious, attempt-
 " ing to rival their superiors in dresse and
 " furniture, in gaiety, pomp and splen-
 " dor; not keeping that due distance,
 " which inferiors ought evermore to ob-
 " serve.

" Men of a libertine and licentious
 " turn of mind will most readily cry out
 " against priest-craft, and damn the bi-
 " gots of all parties; but especially those
 " who set up for the teachers and in-
 " structors of mankind. They will al-
 " lege, that they use religion as a cloak
 " for ambition and lust of power and
 " dominion, and are evermore studying
 " how to make a gain of godliness.
 " With this view, they will subscribe ar-
 " ticles, which they do not believe; and
 " devoutly make use of prayers, of
 " which they do not heartily approve.

" They

“ They will flatter Princes in their vices, SERM.

“ or at least connive at them ; and assist XVI.

“ the civil magistrate to enslave the peo- ~~~~~

“ ple ; that they themselves may share

“ in the spoils of persecution and arbi-

“ trary power : that the morals of some

“ of them have been bad, and some of

“ their doctrines the most absurd and ri-

“ diculous. And, if we were to reckon

“ up all the idle and absurd notions they

“ have propagated, and the tyranny and

“ slavery, the persecution and amazing

“ cruelty, which they have fomented, it

“ might be questioned whether they have

“ not done infinitely more harm than

“ good.

“ *Ecclesiastics*, in return, will not fail

“ to complain of the licentiousness and

“ infidelity of the age, of the shameful

“ neglect of religion and public worship ;

“ of the little reverence which is paid to

“ them and their sacred order ; and of

“ the great abounding of all manner of

“ vice and wickedness. — Some of the

“ clergy, who are dignified with high

“ titles, and enriched with the affluent

“ emoluments of an established church,

SERM. " can, with great zeal, pray against the

XVI. " increase of *heresy* and *schism*, intending

" thereby mens thinking for themselves,

" and worshiping God according to their

" own consciences and in their own way.

" And those, who dissent from the mul-

" titude, are very ready to complain of

" the unjust authority and imposing spirit

" of some in the establishment; their

" great zeal for trifling ceremonies, their

" coldness and formality in the worship

" of God; their indifference about peace

" and charity, and the little regard which

" they manifest towards scrupulous con-

" sciences. The sects and persons of

" more free and generous sentiments will

" not scruple to condemn that dictating

" spirit of infallibility and dominion,

" pride and arrogance, bigotry and un-

" charitableness, which they observe in

" those of more narrow sentiments. And

" the last, in return, will complain aloud

" of the growth of error and heresie,

" damnable doctrines and dangerous de-

" lusions; they will fast, and lament

" the corruption and degeneracy of

" others; though they (some of them)

" sel-

“ seldom confesse their own sins, or pray SERM.
“ for the pardon of them. AGAIN; XVI.
“ the drunkard and the prodigal will
“ freely exclaim against the odious vice
“ of covetousnesse; and the covetous in-
“ veigh most bitterly against the profu-
“ sion, extravagance, and luxury of our
“ age and nation. The rich will acknow-
“ lege that the poor are saucy and inso-
“ lent, idle and troublesome; that they
“ will work no longer than they are
“ forced to it; and that they do not be-
“ have with that modesty, humility,
“ frugality, prudence and industry, which
“ become persons in their station. The
“ poor will tell you, on the other hand,
“ that the rich are proud and oppressive,
“ uncharitable, hard-hearted and cruel;
“ that they live in ease and splendor
“ themselves, and fare sumptuously every
“ day; but neglect the forceful cries of
“ hunger, and the piercing complaints
“ of those who are ready to perish with
“ cold. Old persons see the errors of
“ youth, and are very warm in censur-
“ ing their thoughtlesse, extravagance
“ and folly. And youth are very much

SERM. "offended with the morosenesse and au-

XVI. "sterity of old age. Thus every one

~ "condemns the vices and follies of
 "others ; but what doeth this conduce
 "to a national reformation ? Or where
 "is the person, who observes such a fast,
 "with a view to amend his own faults ?
 "If we could perceive such effects, we
 "could have no objection. But such a
 "mutual accusing of one another, and
 "shifting the blame off from ourselves,
 "must rather produce bad effects than
 "good ones, and is itself a vice instead
 "of a virtue."

Now, as to this long and formidable objection, I would observe, that holding up prevailing vices to public view is one of the best means, that I know of, to put all ranks and orders of men in mind of their faults : and the more they are spoke of, with censure and condemnation, the more likely they are to be repented of, and forsaken. Persons of different stations in life, or different parties in religion, should consider what their enemies say of them. If it is false and groundlesse, or if it be in itself no fault, they have no

occa-

occasion to be moved by it. The con-
sciousness of their own integrity is suffi-
cient to support them against all unjust

SERM.

XVI.

censures, and encourage them to persevere
in the right way. But, as far as the ac-
cusations of their adversaries are well-
grounded, they ought to be listened to, and
lead the guilty to repentance and amend-
ment. — It is true, every one's first and
principal concern is to search into his
own conduct, and repent of his own sins.
But none of us should be unconcerned
for our neighbors and acquaintance, for
our countrey, or for the church of God ;
but should exert ourselves, and do all in
our power to promote that righteousness,
which will secure and exalt our nation ;
and to put away that sin, which must be
the reproach, and threaten the ruine, of any
people.

There are some great and national
vices, which I could heartily wish to see
reformed. It would be exceeding well, if
those numerous and insnaring oaths,
which are required at the custom-house,
in taking up the freedom of the city,
putting churchwardens and other parish-
officers

SERM. officers into their office, and the like;
 XVI. were either quite abolished, or explained
 in such a manner, as that conscientious
 men need not scruple them, for fear of
 incurring the dreadful guilt of perjury.
 It were also a desirable thing to have the
 statutes of our universities revised and al-
 tered; or the oaths and subscriptions re-
 moved, which are required in order to
 enter into our colleges. For as it is, ei-
 ther our youth know not what those sta-
 tutes are, which they swear to observe;
 or, if they know them, they will find
 them either impracticable, or very diffi-
 cult to be observed. And yet the oaths
 to observe them must be repeated, once
 and again, by him who would rise to the
 several degrees of honor and dignity there
 conferred. The requiring of all the cler-
 gy to subscribe to articles of mere human
 composition, which several of them are
 thought not thoroughly to believe, and
 some of which seem not easy to be recon-
 ciled with reason and scripture; — and
 likewise to make them swear to observe
canons, some of which are obsolete, and
 others very rigorous and unreasonable; —

This

This must needs be a very wrong method SERM.
of entering a man into *so sacred an office* ; XVI.
where all prevarication and hypocrisy, all
trifling with *oaths* and *subscriptions* ought
industriously to be avoided.

The requiring of every man, that has
any place of burthen, or trust, or profit,
under the government, to qualifie himself
by taking the *Lord's supper* (that solemn
ordinance, which our Lord himself ap-
pointed with quite another purpose) is
one of those abominations, those national
and crying sins, for which the land
mourns. These I call *national vices*,
because they are established by law, and
are grievances, which all wise and good
men must (I suppose) wish to see re-
dressed.

There are other laws of such a nature,
that I should be glad to see them also re-
pealed ; but I will mention no more of
them at present. And some, perhaps,
will think that I have already mentioned
too many.

As to that luxury and extravagance in
all kinds ; that horrible cursing and pro-
fane swearing, which are so often heard

in

SERM. in our streets ; the various kinds of lewd-
 XVI. ness and debauchery ; the drunkenness
 and gluttony ; the theft and robbery, and
 all manner of fraud and dishonesty ; the
 gaming and prodigality ; the prophaning
 the *Lord's day*, and the neglect and con-
 tempt of divine worship, both in public
 and private ; the little concern, which ap-
 pears in many parents and masters of fa-
 milies, to keep their children and servants
 under due restraints and regulations, and
 to instruct them in the principles of reli-
 gion and virtue ; the head-strong, ungo-
 vernable and licentious behavior of
 youth, who set their hearts on scarce any
 thing but dresse and pleasure, gaiety and
 endless diversions ; the spreading of *en-
 thusiasm*, on the one hand ; and *infidelity*,
 on the other ; which mutually cause or
 occasion one another ; — these are things,
 which one cannot, on such an occasion,
 forbear to take notice of, and most hear-
 tily lament. And it is a thing greatly to
 be wished, that the guilty would amend,
 and so prevent the judgments of heaven
 from falling on a guilty land, and save
 themselves from the wrath to come.

The

The nations, with which we are now SERM.
engaged in war, have (it must be con- XVI.
fessed) greater abominations in the midst
of them ; such as most dreadful persecu-
tions in matters of religion, established
by their laws, and executed with the
greatest rigor. The restless pride of one
of the courts, to make kings of the younger
sons of the family ; and the boundless
ambition of the other, to gain and esta-
blish an universal monarchy, to give laws
to the nations, and to make the fate of
Europe to depend upon the nod of their
grand monarch ; — these are vices from
which (blessed be God) our land is free.
I should think the perfidy and boundless
ambition of the latter were enough to ex-
cite all the nations round them to join in
one common confederacy, in order to
destroy their power and capacity to mo-
lest the neighboring nations any more ;
— would render them the abhorrence
and detestation of mankind ; and cause
them to be looked upon, as common ene-
mies, and the grand disturbers of the
peace and tranquillity of *Europe*.

We

SERM. We are now fighting for our laws and
 XVI. for our liberties, for our friends and families, and for our dear native country. May the guilty be prevailed upon, to repent of their sins, and the righteous persevere in their integrity ! May almighty God pour down the best of blessings upon our most gracious king and all his royal family ! May he grant understanding to our counsellors, and teach our senators wisdom ! May he inspire with stediness and unanimity, with conduct and bravery, our fleets and our armies, our auxiliaries and allies ; and may the blessing of heaven attend us in all our just and lawful undertakings ! And finally, may we be favored, in due time, with a safe, honorable, advantageous, and lasting peace and tranquillity ! Then will our trade revive and flourish, our fields yield their increase, and there will be no room for complaining in our streets. Then will the divine protection be the glory of our land ; and upon all that glory there will be a defence.

But, whether national sins be repented of, or no ; and temporal success denied,

or

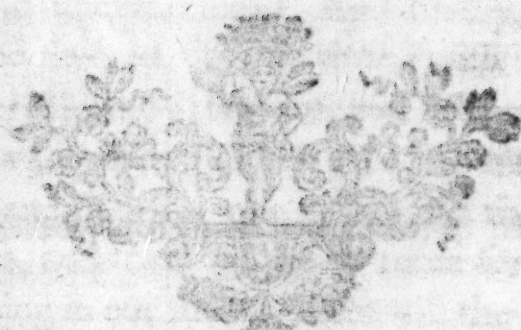
Or granted; every truly pious, penitent and righteous person may depend upon acceptance and successe hereafter; and may hope (thro' the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ) to be delivered from death, and to enter into the land of perfect peace and everlasting felicity, where neither wars nor rumors of wars can reach or disturb him any more.

SERM.
XVI.

And God grant that we may all of us finally attain to the blessednesse of that happy world, Amen!

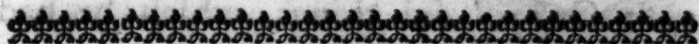


or granted; every truly pious penitent and
 righteous person may depend upon receive. XVI.
 and mercifully bestow; and may
 hope (thru' the mediation of our Lord
 Jesus Christ) to be delivered from death;
 and to enter into the land of perfect peace
 and everlasting felicity, where neither
 wars nor rumors of wars can reach or
 disturb him any more.
 And God grant that we may all of us
 finally attain to the blessedness of that
 happy world; Amen!





S E R M O N XVII.



Preached at *Crouched-Friars, London,*
Oct. 9, 1746.

Being the day of public Thanksgiving for
the Glorious Victory, obtained over
the Rebels, near *Culloden-House*, in
Scotland.

By his Majesty's gallant troops, under the
command of his Royal Highness, the
brave *William Duke of Cumberland*.

Containing a brief history of the rebel-
lion; and pointing out the proper im-
provement of the suppression of it.

Published at the earnest request of some who
heard it.

Pf. cvi. part of the 12th and 13th verses.

*They sang his praise; they soon forgot his
works.*

E e

THIS

SERM.
XVII.

HIS is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving unto God, for the great and wonderful things, which he had done for the nation of Israel. And, accordingly, it begins thus: *Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord. For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter all the mighty acts of the Lord! Who can shew forth all his praise!* And, having praised God for his goodnesse, the *Psalmist* acknowledges the unworthy returns, which Israel had made, for so many and such great mercies. And, among other things, he saith, *ver. 10, &c. He saved them from the hand of them that hated them; and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies, [i. e. at the red sea.] There was not one of them left. Then believed they his Words. [And, while they were under the first, strong, and lively sense of their remarkable deliverance,] They sung the Praises of God. [But those impressions of love and gratitude soon wore off. And then] They for-*
gat

gat his Works. They waited not for his SERM.
counsel; but turned aside to their old XVII.
vices and follies; and behaved much as
they had done before.

The blessings of almighty God to the
people of *Israel*; and the unworthy re-
turns they made, for so many and such
distinguishing favors, are left upon re-
cord, for an admonition to us, upon
whom the ends of the world are come;
that we may not sin after the same exam-
ple of unbelief, ingratitude, and disobe-
dience.

How many and what ample blessings
have been bestowed upon us! God has
cast our happy lot in one of the largest,
if not the largest, island in the world.
As the rocks were round about *Jerusalem*;
so is the mighty ocean round about *Great*
Britain. This prevents the sudden inva-
sion of our land, and causes us to have
peace and tranquillity in our borders;
while the neighboring nations upon the
continent are subject to sudden, hostile
incursions; and all the misery and deso-
lation of war. And, since the union be-
tween *England* and *Scotland*, no invasion

SERM. has been successful against us. Nor
 XVII. while, by the favor of heaven, we remain masters at sea, need we to fear the sudden incursions of any enemy. — We are blessed with a mild and healthful climate. Our mountains are lined with metals and minerals of inestimable worth: and our vallies yield a most plentiful increase. Our pastures are covered with woolly flocks and the grazing herd. — We have many commodious ports and excellent harbors. *Our merchants are princes, and our traffickers the honorable of the earth.* We are situated between the old world and the new; whereby we are enabled to extend our trade and commerce to the most distant parts of the earth; to carry out our own superfluities, and to receive in return a large and willing tribute from the most remote nations, and widely differing climes. — By our navy, we have, for some time, been accounted *masters at sea*; the support of the distressed, but the terror of the tyrants and oppressors of mankind. Our armed forces have been renowned for their valor; have shaken the thrones of tyrants, and granted
 succor

succor and redresse to injured princes and nations. — Our wise laws, and most excellent, civil constitution, our generous plan of liberty, and the secure possession of our lives and properties, have rendered us the admiration and envy of the surrounding nations. — For the greatest part of a whole century, the plague has not been in *Great Britain*. And we have not, for a number of years, had famine or scarcity in our land.

Christianity came over very early into this island. And, when *Popery* had corrupted the gospel, and introduced thick darknesse, and the most abject slavery, some of the first reformers sprung up here: and particularly the famous *John Wickliffe*, who has been justly called *The morning star of the reformation*. His writings contributed greatly to enlighten *Martin Luther* and others, and to dispel the thick darknesse of a long, long night of ignorance and barbarity, both in *England* and in foreign countries. — After various struggles of the friends of truth and liberty, and the surprizing faith and patience of great numbers of confessors and

SERM. martyrs, *our Court* imbraced the reforma-
 XVII. *tion*; and protected the *protestants*, who
 ~~~~~ had been long and severely persecuted.

From that time unto this very day, the *Papists* have been restless and unwearied, and have raised wars and commotions in every reign, to bring us back again into that spiritual *Egypt*, that house of darkness and bondage; but kind heaven has hitherto helped us, and baffled their designs; and that once and again, when they thought themselves sure of success.

— Since the late *glorious revolution*, there has been liberty to study the word of God, and to worship the divine being in spirit and truth; with a manly, free, and rational worship. That may be called *The Era of liberty! The noblest Epocha in the English, or in any other annals whatever!* From that blessed time, the houses of God have not been once shut up. And, as the fruit of our distinguishing liberty, *Christianity* is better understood, and better defended than in any other country, or in any age, since the days of the apostles. And, as the pure gospel originally went out from *Jerusalem*, we may hope that



that the same gospel, freed from the corruption of a long succession of ages, may from us go through the earth, and the notice thereof to the ends of the world.

SERM.

XVII.

A few years ago, all *Europe* was in profound peace ; and had been so, for some time ; when the ambition of the late *Queen of Spain* led her to spirit up that nation to insult our ships, and disturb our trade and commerce, especially in *America*. But her principal reason was, because we would not proceed to lend an helping hand towards aggrandizing her family, at the expence of other kingdoms and nations. — Those insults we bore, for a long while ; but were at length forced to declare war against *Spain*, as the only way to redress our grievances and protect our trade.

The *French* had, for some time, been repairing the harbor of *Dunkirk*, and meditating schemes of extending their dominions. — The death of the last *Emperor* but one gave them a pretence to break into the empire, and to begin to put their ambitious projects in execution. And, as *Great Britain* has ever been a bar to the

SERM. ambitious views of *France*, the *French*  
 XVII. first assisted *Spain* as an ally ; and after-

wards declared war against us. Now, in a war with *Great Britain*, one part of the game of the *French* court, for several years past, has been to make use of the *Pretender* and his family, as tools to serve their own purposes and to distress us. — With this view, the *Pretender's* elder son was sent for from *Rome* : and, towards the beginning of the last year, dispatched away to the *Highlands of Scotland* ; the constant resource of that *Popish and abjured family*, ever since *James the II.* was deposed and banished. — The design of that expedition was either to take us unprovided, and so make *Great Britain* a province to *France* ; or a kingdom entirely dependent upon the *Grand Monarch* : or to cause us to call home our troops from *Flanders*, that we might not interrupt the progress of the *French* arms.

*The rebellion* appeared, at first, like a cloud in the heavens, no bigger than a man's hand : though afterwards it spread darkness and terror over the whole island. *The Pretender's son*, after one repulse by  
 sea,

sea, arrived in the N. W. parts of *Scotland*, SERM.  
attended only by six or seven persons ; XVII.  
without men, without money, without  
arms and ammunition ; and without any  
fleet, or navy. Such a begining was  
thought so contemptible as to deserve no  
regard. By that fatal neglect, he was  
allowed to gather forces among the dis-  
affected clans, and to arm them as well as  
he could. And *France* and *Spain* sent  
him arms and ammunition, some officers  
and some money ; and (according to cus-  
tom) promised a great deal more than  
ever they performed. By such means,  
the spirit of the faction was rouzed, and  
their numbers in *Scotland* considerably  
increased. By an invitation from the *Jacobites*  
at *Edinburgh*, the rebels were in-  
duced to cross *the Frith*, and march to  
the capital city of that kingdom. And  
they were received into the town without  
resistance. But, by the vigilance of a  
brave officer \*, they could never get pos-  
session of that important place, the castle.

\* Lieute-  
nant-  
general

Two or three years before, the *French* *Guest*.  
had projected a most dreadful invasion,  
on the southern parts of this island. But  
kind



SERM. kind heaven sent a storm, and baffled the  
 XVII. design. *He blew with his wind, and they*  
*were dispersed.* — However, to favor the  
 rebellion, they threatened us with a se-  
 cond invasion. And what incouraged  
 them, and gave us the greatest anxiety,  
 was, These things were carrying on at a  
 time, when almost all our troops were  
 abroad. The rebels had not been long  
 in *Edinburgh*, before they attacked that  
 handful of the King's forces, which were  
 then in *Scotland*; and, on *Sept. 21. at*  
*Preston-pans*, gave them an intire defeat.  
 Forgive me, if I drop a tear over my  
 pious and valiant friend, the brave Col.  
*Gardiner*; who, scorning to turn his back  
 and run away, nobly died in the bed of  
 honor; and there fell, that fatal day,  
 by the hands of barbarous ruffians, a glo-  
 rious sacrifice in his country's cause.

After that battle, the rebellion became  
 a very serious affair, and struck a pannic  
 into the well-affected part of the nation.  
 And, had the rebels come forward di-  
 rectly for *England*, there had been nothing  
 to have stoped their progress. But, in  
 all appearance, they might have marched

for-

forward to this grand metropolis. But SERM.  
now God began to infatuate their coun- XVII.  
cils, and blow upon their enterprize. For  
they stayed at *Edinburgh* almost two  
months ; exacting contributions, plunder-  
ing that city and the neighboring country,  
and committing great outrages and hosti-  
lities ; though they pretended they came  
to save the nation from oppression.—Their  
delay gave the other parts of the kingdom  
time to breathe and recollect themselves.  
And they did not fail to improve the op-  
portunity, by entering into many and for-  
midable associations ; and opening large  
and generous subscriptions. The winds  
also, contrary to their usual course at that  
season, waisted home our troops, by one  
of the quickest and safest voyages that  
ever was known. Thus the stars in their  
courses appeared for us. The winds and  
the waves favored our righteous cause.—  
The eastern road's being protected, by nu-  
merous forces, determined the rebels to  
march into *England* by the western road ;  
where they committed many outrages,  
and spread a general terror and consterna-  
tion around them. There being nothing  
on .

SERM. on that road to resist them, they took  
XVII. *Carlisle*. And, after that, came forward  
into the heart of the kingdom, being  
about 7000 in number ; — and were making rapid marches for this capital city. And, on the 8th day of *December*, in the last year, both friends and foes generally expected that they would attempt to march into this metropolis. — The terror of such an expectation is not now to be described ; and seems at this distance more like a dream, than what was once most generally believed. And, had they come among us ! Then all the mischief, they actually did, would have been nothing, in comparison with the spreading confusion and desolation which must have ensued.

A little before their march to *Derby*, the King sent his heroic son, *the Duke*, to head our forces, and to chastise the rebellious crew. His presence inspired our troops with new life and spirit, and made the rebels turn back by the way, by which they came, and make a precipitate retreat to *Scotland*.

By



By our watchful guards upon the SERM.  
 southern coast, and the great vigilance of XVII.  
 our fleet, the *French* invasion was happily  
 prevented. And, by the prudent care of  
 the government, and the great zeal and  
 spirit of the loyal and well-affected inha-  
 bitants, the *Papists* and *Jacobites*, in and  
 about this great city, were discouraged  
 from making any tumult or insurrection ;  
 from attempting to set the city on fire, (as  
 they once did) or to massacre the *Prote-*  
*stant* inhabitants thereof : which (I doubt  
 not but) they would still be glad to do.  
 For *Poper*y, where it dare shew itself,  
 is at this day the same cruel thing as ever.

When the rebels began to flie, the  
*Duke* and his gallant troops persued ; driv-  
 ing them before them like a flock of sheep  
 or timorous goats. And overtaking the  
 rear of them at *Clifton*, a small village  
 upon the borders of *Cumberland*, he, with  
 fewer troops, and other circumstances of  
 disadvantage, got the better of them in a  
 smart skirmish ; and made the main body  
 of them flie forward, with terror and the  
 utmost precipitation. — After they had  
 rested a few days at *Carlisle*, and left some  
 of

*A thanksgiving sermon for*

SERM. of their forces in that city, to be sacrificed  
 XVII. for the safety of their fugitive *hero* and of  
 ~~~~~ the rest of his army, the rebels marched  
 away into *Scotland*, and there repeted
 their cruel extortions, and barbarities,
 upon the loyal inhabitants, and more especially upon the loyal city of *Glasgow*.

The Duke, being called home to Court, the army persued, and got possession of *Edinburgh*. And, at *Falkirk*, a battle was fought; but in such a manner, that neither side had any great reason to triumph. — Then it was that our most gracious King behaved like *the tender and compassionate father of his people*, and made his paternal affection to *the Duke*, to give way to his love to the nation. For then he parted, a second time, with his beloved son, sending him to the army again. His very *name* struck a terror into the hearts of the rebels; whose chiefs took great pains to prevent their army's believing, that *the Duke* was come again. And, indeed, his presence alone was equal to some thousands of troops. So much was he the darling of the army, as well as of the rest of the nation! — After going through

through many hardships and great fatigues, SERM.
the royal youth got his army in readinesse, XVII.
crossed the river *Spey*, with speedy marches
sought out the enemy, in that bleak and
desart country; and, on the 16th day of
the last *April*, gave them battle on a com-
mon, near *Culloden-house*. So skilfully
did he draw up his forces in battle-array;
with such undaunted bravery did he ani-
mate his soldiers; with so much wisdom
and intrepidity did he lead them on to the
attack, that our troops were impatient to
imitate their great leader; and the hearts
of the rebels soon sunk within them.—In
such a situation, it is no wonder that vic-
tory soon declared herself on our side;
and that the *Duke's* army surrounded his
and our mortal foes, and cut off some
thousands in the field of battle; without
the help of our allies, or of our hired
forces; and that with a very inconsidera-
ble losse on our side. — Then it was that
the thunder of the *Duke of Cumberland's*
arms struck a panic into the *patched-up*
Hero; and made him run away with the
first for his life, and carry to *Inverness*
the most early tidings of his own disgrace:
—thereby

SERM.—thereby giving one of the strongest
 XVII. proofs, that was possible, of his legitimacy; and that he is really descended from that race of *tyrants*, from whence he derives his pedigree.

There fell the glory of this wild and romantic expedition, which posterity will read with wonder and astonishment; and which we ourselves, already, can scarcely believe. — When their mighty chief was fled without *his crown*, and showed how unwilling he was to have *a coffin*, the other part of the alternative in his motto, the rebels dispersed various ways. Some got over to *France* with great difficulty; others betook themselves to their *everlasting hills*. Several were killed in the pursuit; others taken prisoners; and others, in great numbers, laid down their arms, and submitted to the King's mercy.

All those, who have been brought to the bar, have had the most fair and equitable trial. And those, who have not pleaded *guilty*, have been, most of them, convicted and found guilty of *high-treason against their King and country*. — It is part of the excellence of our make, that
 anger

anger is planted in us, to rouse us to SERM.
bring criminals to justice. And that we XVII.
have, likewise, a principle of humanity
and compassion, to prevent our carrying
our resentments to cruelty, and to lead us
to mix *mercy* with *justice*, as far as the
public good will fairly admit. And we
have a *King* upon the throne, whose ten-
derness and compassion is so great, that
he with reluctance punishes *rebels*, those
sons of violence, those insolent and daring
enemies, who would have been glad to
have imbrued their hands in his sacred
blood; and to have cut off his illustrious
family, root and branch. And scarce
ever was so much mercy and lenity shown
to persons chargeable with such compli-
cated crimes.

Besides this effectual crushing of the
rebellion, the death of the *King of Spain*;
and of his daughter, the dauphiness of
France; and the very great success of
our very good allies, in *Italy*, seem to be
very kind providences in our favor; and
our situation is now remarkably altered
for the better, compared with what it
was a year ago. — *This is the Lord's*

F f

doing,

SERM. *doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

XVII. These are the ample and desireable blessings, for which we are now assembled to give thanks unto Almighty God. —
 “ Blessed be thou, O Lord God of our
 “ fathers, for ever and ever ! Thine, O
 “ Lord, is the greatnesse, and the power,
 “ and the victory, and the majesty ! For
 “ all that is in heaven and earth is thine !
 “ Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and
 “ thou art exalted as head above all !
 “ Both riches, and honor, and strength,
 “ and victory, procede from thee, and
 “ thou reignest over all ! In thine hand is
 “ power and might ; and in thine hand
 “ it is to make great and to give strength
 “ unto all ! Now, therefore, our God,
 “ we thank thee, and praise thy glorious
 “ name ! ”

It is very true, the constant and uniform protection of providence calls for as great, or greater thankfulnesse, than even deliverances from overwhelming calamities, or formidable and impending dangers. But, while we, in an uninterrupted series, injoy the bounties of providence, we are very apt to slight or undervalue them.

them. And we never relish any mercy SERM.
so thoroughly, as when we have lost it, XVII.
or are in danger of losing it. — While
we enjoy the numberless blessings of life
without danger, we are apt to forget that
God is our constant benefactor, and that
all these things are the effects of his munificence; or to ascribe them to second causes, and the common course of things. As if second causes, and the common course of things, were something different from the wise means, which God has appointed, to carry on his own grand purposes, for the general good. Whereas the blessings, which we enjoy, every day, are as much the gift of God, and the effects of his tender concern for us, as extraordinary events, and great and uncommon deliverances. And, because such a continual profusion of common blessings makes not the proper impressions, God rouses us to consider, by setting dangers before us, or bringing calamities upon us; and then delivering us, that we may glorify him.

In thanking almighty God, who has delivered us from unspeakable misery, we are not to suppose, that we can add

SERM. any thing to his perfection, or happineſſe :

XVII. that God loves to hear himſelf flattered

or complimented, extolled or applauded, by creatures of his own forming ; eſpecially by ſuch poor worms as we are. But then we praife and glorifie God aright, when we ſo meditate on his glorious perfections and wonderful works, as to become like him in all holineſſe and righteouſneſſe ; to love him more, obey him more conſtantly, and chearfully acquieſce in all his diſpoſals of us, and of all that concerns us. — *He that offereth praife, with theſe views, glorifieth God. And unto him, that ordereth his converſation aright, ſhall finally be ſhown the ſalvation of the Lord.*

To render us more thankful, it may be proper to open our eyes a little upon the dreadful conſequences of the rebels conquering the *Duke*, as he conquered them ; and then to take ſome notice of the way, in which we ſhould expreſſe our gratitude ; that we may avoid the reproach in the text, of *ſinging the praises of God, and ſoon forgetting his wonderful works.*

No less than our *all* was at stake. SERM.
And, had the rebels been victorious at XVII.
Culloden, who can expresse the dire consequences of such an event! — They would soon have bent their march towards *London*, and attempted to set their despicable and worthlesse hero upon the throne of *Great Britain*. Our royal family and their friends, both at home and abroad, would have exerted themselves to have opposed them. And this happy nation would have been an *Aceldama*, a field of blood. If the pretender had mounted the throne, the nobility and gentry must soon have given up the *Church-lands*; and, besides being striped of their estates, they would also have had long arrears to account for. The stocks and public funds, a great part of which were raised to defend our liberties against that race of tyrants, would have been wiped out with a sponge; and thousands of families thereby reduced at once from plenty to the greatest poverty. An ignominious peace must have been speedily claped up. Not only *Cape Breton* and *Gibraltar* restored; but some other of our best plantations and

SERM. settlements abroad basely given up to our
 XVII. present enemies. Our best branches of
 trade and commerce would have been
 thought too little to pay them for helping
 the Pretender to the throne: and some of
 our best ports would, in all probability,
 have been delivered up, as securities for
 our good intentions and grateful dispositions
 towards *France* and *Spain*. If this
 great city had asserted its rights, and manifested
 its wonted spirit of zeal for *liberty*;
 it would (most likely) have been plundered,
 and set on fire; and the *Protestant*
 inhabitants thereof sacrificed by a general
 massacre, like that of *Ireland* or *Paris*.
 — And what must have become of us, in
 those days of vengeance?

The wise and generous plan of government,
 “ by which we are more effectually secured
 against the extremes of confusion and arbitrary
 power than any other nation; and of which we
 experience the happy fruits, every moment of
 our lives:”
 — That excellent civil constitution, which
 has rendered us the envy and admiration of
 the surrounding nations; — that glorious
 plan of liberty; the work of ages;
 the

the worthy price of so much blood and SERM.
treasure ; the source of peace and plenty ; XVII.
from whence, by the blessing of heaven, 
flows the secure possession of the life, li-
berty and property of every, even the
meanest, subject : — How would this ex-
cellent constitution have been overturned,
as in a moment ? For, as it were, in one
hour, it would have been stabbed to the
heart, and received its fatal wound ; and
that by a race of tyrants, who claim it as
their right, by inheritance, to treat us as
their slaves or cattle, and to make their
own will the supreme law of the land. —
And, when tyranny and slavery had ri-
veted our chains and fetters upon us ;
when every thing, which we value, as
men, as *Britons* and free-men, had
been gone : what must have become of
posterity ? or what would life have been
worth to every benevolent person, to
every sincere lover of his country and of
the human race ?

Another very horrible consequence of
the success of the *late rebellion* would
have been, that *our most holy religion*,
grounded on right reason and the pure

SERM. word of God, must have been changed
 XVII. for ignorance and barbarity, superstition
 and idolatry, absurdity and blasphemy. Swarms of insolent, debauched, domineering and tyrannical *priests* would have lorded it over God's heritage ; and (like the locusts of *Egypt*) eat up every green thing. They would have called the *English Heretics* to a severe account, for keeping them so many years from the possession of this good land. And, if any had refused implicitly to submit to the dictates of *Mother-Church* ; that would have been looked upon, as an undoubted mark of *heretical pravity*, and an high insult upon *the Clergy* ; who, when other arguments had failed, would not have forgot to have called in the secular arm, with fetters and dungeons, the ax and the gibbet, the inquisition or the *Smithfield-fires*, to have convinced the consciences of *Protestants*, and illuminated their minds. — Nor are these merely imaginary terrors. For *Popery* is now the same bloody religion as ever. And our poor, distressed, *protestant brethren*, in the southern parts of *France*, are, at this time, suffering a most dread-

dreadful persecution ; merely because of SERM.
their religion. And the hellish court of XVII.
inquisition still subsists in *Spain, Portugal,*
Italy, and other *Popish* countries. — Now,
if the *protestant religion* was to sink in
Great Britain : if our laws and liberties
were to be torne from us, and we were
to be governed by tyrannical Princes,
merciless priests, and a standing army,
consisting of *savage highlanders* and *Irish*
renegadoes, commanded and directed by
France and *Rome* : — Where would the
liberties of *Europe* find support ? Or the
Protestant religion a refuge from the rage
of the tyrants and persecutors of the
earth ? *Europe* must become *French* ; and
the *grand monarch* the *universal monarch*.
Asia and *Africa* are already groaning un-
der arbitrary government, and have long
groaned under that oppressive yoke. And
America must have sunk together with
Europe. Thus would the whole earth
have become full of the habitations of
barbarity and cruelty ; the pure gospel
banished from among men ; and the
whole surface of the globe a scene of ty-
ranny and horror, confusion and desola-
tion.

SERM. tion. — Heaven defend us! From what
 XVII. prodigious and complicated ruine has God
 delivered us? Can we ever forget this
 most signal interposition of providence in
 our favor? Is it possible for us, who now
 so gladly and gratefully *sing his praises*, in
 a few years to *forget these his wonderful*
works? — Thus should we excite our
 gratitude, by the things which we might
 have suffered, if our enemies had pre-
 vailed.

Let us now attend to some of the happy
 consequences of the rebellion, and of our
 late most glorious victory over the rebels.

(I.) Hereby we are more sensible of
 the blessing of having a *protestant prince*
 on the throne, who has now, for almost
 20 years, constantly governed us by the
 laws of the land; and who is, under
 God, the defender of our excellent con-
 stitution and invaluable liberties.

Tyrants may reign by means of their
 guards and large standing armies; and,
 by force, keep their subjects in awe for a
 time. But, when, by their oppression,
 they have lost the love of their subjects,
 and the people have a fair opportunity to
 take

take their revenge ; no guards, no armed SERM.
force can overawe an incensed multitude. XVII.

Then it is that the tyrant trembles, and
his subjects discover their aversion to him.

— But he, who has behaved as *the father*
of his country, and governed them with
mildness and equity, in a time of peace
and tranquillity ; in a time of public dis-
tress, a whole nation trembles for him ;
and dreads the thought of changing the
Father of their country and his family, for
a race of hereditary tyrants, who would
make the lives, liberties and properties of
the people depend upon their nod. — Our
most gracious and excellent King, though
he had always governed with mild and
gentle sway ; yet, by the secret arts and
restless endeavors of *Jacobites* and *Popish*
priests, was rendered odious and unpo-
pular. However, he bore their repeated
insolence with astonishing patience and
lenity ; which, instead of reducing them
to affection and loyalty, hardened them in
their wickedness, and encouraged them
to abuse him and his illustrious family
still the more. That spirit of disaffection
ended in *an open rebellion*. Then it was
that

SERM. that the abused nation opened their eyes ;

XVII. and even the *common people* discerned that

they had been grossly imposed upon. Not one *English* nobleman, or gentleman of any distinction, joined the rebellious crew ; and the commonalty, likewise, as it has also done on some other important occasions, judged right, and hated and abhorred the rebels, as traitors to their King and country. Our most gracious sovereign, from being unpopular, became on a sudden the darling of the people, and his royal house was regarded as the only family proper to rule over *Great Britain*. Such associations were entered into, and such subscriptions opened, for the defence of *his Majesty's person, family and government*, as no age or nation can parallel. The worthy merchants of this city, who are gentlemen of true honor, and the most extensive blessings to the land, entered into an agreement to support *the public credit* ; when it was boldly struck at : and when the sinking of it would have brought on unspeakable distress and ruine. And many brave subjects, to their immortal honor, voluntarily

tarily and chearfully offered to hazard SERM.
their lives, and even to spend the last XVII.
drop of their blood, in defence of our ex-
cellent King and happy constitution. —
By such speaking facts, the King is con-
vinced that he is sincerely beloved by his
people; who know how to distinguish
such a prince and his family from *that*
race of tyrants, which *the wisdom of the*
nation deposed and banished.

It now gives his most sacred majesty
the highest satisfaction, and will passe
down upon record, in the *British Annals*,
to future ages, how much *George the II^d*.
was beloved by his good subjects: and
what an hearty zeal, affection and loyalty
they expressed, in a time of common
danger, and when the sincerity of their
pretensions was put to the proof. — Nor
ought it ever to be forgot how much the
wise and valiant conduct of that royal
youth, *the brave and beloved William,*
Duke of Cumberland, contributed to
strengthen the general affection for *his*
Majesty and for all the *royal family*.

SERM. (2.) Another agreeable consequence of
 XVII. our late situation was the happy union of
 ~~~~~ *Protestants*, of various denominations,  
 against the *Papists*, our common enemies;  
 and in defence of our excellent constitution.

I could sincerely wish that the different sects and parties of *Protestants* would continue to cultivate this desirable union of affection, now the danger is over. And not be like the factions in *Jerusalem*, just before its final desolation; who agreed to oppose the common enemy, in time of immediate danger; but fell into their former strifes and divisions, their angry quarrels and uncharitable contentions, as soon as the danger seemed to be over, and the common enemy was withdrawn a little.

(3.) A spirit of seriousness and religion, and particularly a spirit of prayer and supplication, was revived, for a while; when such a spirit seemed, by a course of many years tranquillity, to be expiring among us.

But



But now the danger is over, this will, SERM.  
(I am afraid) like the last, prove merely XVII.  
a temporary consequence; which was  
owing perhaps more to fear, in a time of  
danger, than to a deep and lasting con-  
viction of the importance, necessity, and  
propriety of a spirit of seriousness and de-  
votion, at all times, and in all circum-  
stances whatever,

(4.) There seemed also to be revived,  
in the nation, a sense of the necessity of  
*a general reformation.* — The places of  
luxury and diversion were, some of them,  
shut up for a while. And it seemed to  
be the voice of the people, that *national*  
*virtue* was the only thing that could save  
the kingdom from impending ruine.  
But how deplorable will it be, if, after  
we have *sung the praises of God*, we soon  
*forget the wonderful things he hath done for*  
*us*; and run into all manner of luxury and  
debauchery, infidelity and immorality?  
If places of pleasure and diversion should  
become more numerous than ever? And  
our other vices grow, in proportion to  
our sensuality and luxury.

(5.) Little

SERM. (5.) Little had been done of late to  
XVII. stop the progresse of *Popery*, either by  
our magistrates ; or by others, whose  
business it seems more especially to be.  
God, therefore, took this method to give  
some check to the great progresse of the  
*Papists* and their growing insolence. And,  
as *Popery* and the *Pretender's* interest are  
inseparably united, the defeating of the  
late rebellion has given them both a severe  
rebuke. For a number of professed *Pa-*  
*pists* ; and of *Jacobites*, their good friends  
and allies ; as well as a great number of  
abandoned wretches, and men of despe-  
rate fortunes, devoted to vice and wicked-  
ness, were collected together in the rebel  
army, and overtaken by the destruction,  
which they so well deserved. Now it is  
of unspeakable advantage to any nation,  
to have men of vice, and enemies to the  
community, cut off. By such an event,  
*Popery* will not, for some years, become  
so formidable an evil among us : and the  
*Pretender's* interest, by proper care, need  
never to become so formidable to us  
again.

(6.) Our

(6.) Our most excellent constitution of civil government is, by the wise and good providence of God, strengthened and confirmed by such repeated attacks ; and things reduced again to their proper state, and fixed on a true and solid foundation. SERM.  
XVII.

As the saltneſſe and agitation of the ſea preſerves that huge maſſe of waters from putrefaction, ſo wars and commotions preſerve our civil conſtitution from corruption and ruine. — From all that I have read or known, concerning the ſtate of kingdoms and nations, I ſhould prefer living in *England*, ſince *the late glorious revolution*, to living in any other age or country whatever. For here we have the greateſt liberty, and the moſt ſecure enjoyment of our lives and properties, that ever any age or nation was bleſſed with. — And, in a long ſeries of liberty, peace and plenty ; men are very apt to ſink into indolence and ſupinenefſe, ſloth and luxury, pride and vanity. Theſe vices infeeble our minds and corrupt our manners : and would in time make us an eaſy prey to any ambitious tyrants, or bold



SERM. and rapacious invaders. And, when the  
 XVII. manners of a nation are become very  
 corrupt ; when venality, luxury and ef-  
 feminacy have taken place, and fortitude  
 and public spirit are generally lost ; such  
 a people cannot bear the severity of a  
 proper discipline, or the controul and re-  
 straint of good government. --- They  
 then court their own slavery, and help to  
 put on their own chains and fetters. In  
 such a situation, their ruine is not far off ;  
 and one may (without a spirit of pro-  
 phesie) foretell their doom. So fell the  
 four famous *great monarchies* ! So have  
 many opulent cities and powerful king-  
 doms and empires fallen into ruine. And,  
 Oh that I could say that I think, this  
 happy kingdom had no such symptoms of  
 its approaching desolation ! Or that there  
 was no reason to fear that, in proceſſe of  
 time, it will be added to the number of  
 ruined states and kingdoms ; --- ruined  
 by its own luxury and other vices ; though  
 none of its most potent and formidable  
 enemies could effect its ruine !

By

By the late rebellion, God has shaken SERM.  
the nation; and given some check to the XVII.  
growing spirit of indolence and effemi-  
nacy; rouzed us to think, and awakened  
some of the antient *British* valor and pub-  
lic spirit. Hereby he has established our  
happy constitution, and secured our liber-  
ties to us, a little longer; and prevented  
our sinking into immediate ruine. Thus  
has a kind providence done for us, what  
(if we had the power, yet) we had not  
the inclination to have done for ourselves.  
And the hand of God ought gratefully to  
be acknowledged in all these things,

Permit me to conclude with expressing  
my great fears; least, when we appre-  
hend the danger to be intirely over; when  
God shall see fit to deliver us from the  
spreading infection of the cattle, and to  
grant us peace with the kingdoms of  
*France* and *Spain*; when our trade and  
commerce shall be restored to their free  
course; when peace shall smile upon us  
at home, plenty flow in from abroad, and  
our fields continue to yield a most abun-  
dant increase; --- we should return to all

SERM. our vices and follies, as greedily, or more  
XVII. greedily than ever. We now seem to be  
affected with our late most merciful deliverance. And, I must own, that a more joyful day of *thanksgiving*, I never celebrated; and, very probably, may never again celebrate. We are now (I say) in a thankful frame, and most joyfully sing the praises of *God*, our Savior and deliverer. But is there no danger, that, in a few years, we should forget his works, and the wonders, which his right-hand hath wrought out for our land? No danger of our running into all manner of extravagance and debauchery; of our mimicking the vices and fopperies of our worst enemies; of our manifesting the most insatiable love of pleasure and endlesse diversions, the most daring impiety and shocking profaneness and infidelity; the most astonishing contempt of religion and of the worship of *God*, both public and private; nay, of all that is modest or sober, virtuous or sacred; --- and, by such abominations, pave the way for the most hideous and complicated ruine?

We



We called upon God in the day of SERM.  
trouble. He has heard our prayers ; and XVII.  
is once more trying us, to see how we will  
behave. But, if *Great Britain* will not,  
in this day of her most merciful visitation,  
seriously attend to the things, which be-  
long to her peace and welfare, the time  
will come when her ruine shall be accom-  
plished, and God will no more hear the  
voice of her supplications ; but give her  
up, like the flourishing cities and great  
monarchies of former ages ; and even as  
he gave up the beloved city *Jerusalem*,  
and the highly favored people of the *Jews*,  
as utterly incorrigible, and justly devoted  
to remediless destruction. --- *Oh, my dear  
native country !* How gladly would I con-  
tribute to save thee from such spreading  
desolation ? How earnestly do I wish that  
thou wouldst repent of thy vices, that  
they may not prove thine utter ruine ? ---  
More particularly, let me exhort this  
crowded audience to take care, when you  
have sung the praises of God, not quickly  
to forget his late wonderful works ; but  
remember this deliverance as long as you  
live,

# 454 *A thanksgiving sermon for, &c.*

SERM. live; and live as persons who remember  
XVII. it with the sincerest affection and grati-  
tude.

1 Sam.  
xii. 24,  
25.

I will sum up all, in the words of the prophet Samuel, to the people of Israel. *Only fear the Lord; and serve him in truth, with all your heart. For consider how great things he hath done for you, But, if you will still do wickedly, you shall be consumed, both you and your King.*

**T H E E N D.**

## **E R R A T A.**

**PAGE** 10. p. 13. after [dying] put a note of interrogation. p. 42. l. 1. after [if] r. [he] p. 175. l. 13. r. [parallel,] & passim. p. 178. l. 11. r. [ridiculous] p. 211. l. 18. for [the] r. [their] p. 215. l. 19. r. [tranquillity.] p. 261. l. 1. r. [Jesus.] p. 271. l. 1. d. [and omniscience.] p. 305. for [tabernacle] r. [temple.] p. 308. l. 4. after [goodnesse] put a comma. p. 320. l. ult. after [do] put a period. p. 334. l. 9. after [virtue] d. comma. p. 337. l. 11. after [therefore] put a comma. p. 340. after [institutions] d. comma. p. 420. l. 15. for [work] r. [world.] p. 447. l. last, after [luxury] put a note of interrogation.



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